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THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

P.H.J. LERRIGO

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**THE STATURE OF A
PERFECT MAN**

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

Bible Studies on Spiritual Well-Being

By

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PREFACE

THE following pages have grown out of twenty years' experience in the double ministry of physical healing and Christian teaching as a medical missionary. Dealing constantly with the two series of phenomena, it is perhaps not unnatural that they should have been closely associated in the thinking of the writer, and he has come to believe that the one has much to contribute to the interpretation of the other.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. IN THE SCHOOL OF THE AMÆBA	1
II. NUTRITION	13
III. MOTION	29
IV. REPRODUCTION	47
V. CIRCULATION AND RESPIRATION ...	65
VI. THE HEART	79
VII. THE NERVOUS SYSTEM	97
VIII. CEREBRATION	117
IX. VISION	137
X. SPEECH	153
XI. LIFE'S CONTINUITY	173

The quotations from the New Testament are taken for the most part from "The New Testament in Modern Speech," by R. F. Weymouth, D. Lit.

I

IN THE SCHOOL OF THE AMŒBA

“ The people listened with amazement to His teaching—for there was authority about it: it was very different from that of the Scribes.”—*Mark 1 : 22.*

“ All this Jesus spoke to the people in figurative language, and except in figurative language He spoke nothing to them, in fulfilment of the saying of the Prophet, ‘ I will open my mouth in figurative language, I will utter things kept hidden since the creation of all things.’ ”
—*Matthew 13 : 34, 35.*

IN THE SCHOOL OF THE AMŒBA

I

The Master's Method

The Master taught the principles of eternal truth in the plain terms of things common to the life of his day. Since the days when Jesus walked and talked by Galilee and in the Temple court at Jerusalem, vast realms of knowledge have been opened to the intellect of man. Science has bared the truth of nature in a thousand new directions and undreamed-of natural secrets have become the commonplaces of popular information. Were Jesus here today, it is reasonable to suppose that his teaching of that same everlasting truth would be carried by the vehicles of current thinking and his parables would deal with modern every-day commonplaces, revealing the principles of the kingdom of heaven as they lie thinly veiled beneath the surface of today's ordinary life.

The Law of the Soul Life

The following pages attempt to indicate the wealth of parabolic teaching regarding the soul

life which lies in merely one phase of modern classified knowledge. It should not be supposed that the parallels here drawn are mere analogies. Rather, as has been pointed out by Henry Drummond, we are able to trace fundamental laws which are familiar to us in the physical realm out and up into a higher spiritual sphere. It is as though the Great Artist, in composing the wonderful symphony of creation, had carried the same theme throughout the various movements of his masterpiece, working it out in numberless variations and developing its beauty by exhibiting it in a thousand different settings.

A Cure for Materialism

The scientific statements here given are purposely simplified so that those lacking scientific training need be at no loss, and also because the interpretation of one realm of truth in terms of another must proceed on general lines rather than by a too close pursuit of detail. The very definite parallelism that exists, however, may well suggest to the scientific mind which has been caught in the paralyzing grip of materialism, that while these spiritual truths presented are not susceptible of the same kind of verification as is commonly sought by the mathematician or the physicist, nevertheless, the manner in which spir-

itual truth fits the mold of physical verity with which he is familiar, provides an almost overwhelming weight of presumptive evidence.

II

Gullivers in a Lilliputian World

One of the compensations of the life of the physician is the use of the microscope and the opportunity of observing the myriad forms of minute life thus brought under observation. The achromatic lens snatches a whole world from oblivion, or rather, sharpens our perception to such a degree that we become Gullivers in a Lilliputian world and realize that we move clumsily among innumerable infinitesimal fellow beings, which share with us in simple ways the very same functions and activities of life. We have learned in these latter days to conceive no little respect for these minute creatures, and a rueful realization of their far from despicable powers should render the wise willing to learn the lesson of the microscopic.

A Master of General Principles

The protozoan is a master of general principles, and he who would solve great problems by reducing them to their simplest elements may well

enter the school of the amoeba. The latter is a shy and elusive individual. It takes the practised eye to discover him in his lair, but once the specimen is located, he will repay study. The amoeba may appear at first a perfectly round, homogeneous cell, apparently motionless and lifeless.

The Life Processes of the Amoeba

It takes something of the patience of an Isaac Walton to watch his life processes, but a careful observation will demonstrate that after a time the cell is no longer perfectly round but grows lopsided. A protuberance develops upon one side, which gradually becomes accentuated until a new organ is formed and the cell has manufactured for itself a prehensile instrument capable of wide and varied uses. These new arms are called pseudopodia, or false feet. They represent the cocoanut-acquiring missile of the anthropoid ape, the bow and arrow of the early hunter. They are the prototype of modern machinery. It is by means of these newly manufactured organs that the protozoan carries on his life processes. They serve him in the functions of his life cycle: nutrition, motion, and reproduction. They may be ideally studied in connection with the simple white blood-cell, the leucocyte.

The Beast of Prey

The simple cell has a personality which is readily comprehensible to the human, for his primitive instincts are identical with ours. Appetite asserts itself, and he becomes a beast of prey. Out goes the new arm in the direction of any succulent morsel which he may fancy for breakfast. The edible particle is surrounded by the embrace of this wonderfully useful protuberance. The body of the cell has been described as flowing around it, and the meal is gathered into its internal economy to be accepted and assimilated, or rejected, according as the tastes and requirements of the cell shall dictate. The pseudopodium becomes therefore the active agent of nutrition in the life of the protozoan. Its food supply and growth are dependent upon this newly manufactured limb.

The Farther Horizon

Let it not be supposed that the life of the simple cell is absolutely devoid of variety. It apparently has its diminutive curiosity and speculation as to the farther horizon, and so we find it moving out in one direction or another, led perhaps by the desire for better hunting or fishing. The interesting thing about it, however, is that its means of locomotion prove to be those very same

pseudopodia which formed such a convenient means of acquiring a breakfast, and the little creature is discovered pulling itself along the wall of its containing vessel by means of the contractions and expansions of its body. Whether the leucocyte experiences any sense of gratification from these gymnastics is a matter for speculation, but certainly its life functions are largely dependent upon them. So we discover that in the simple cell not only the function of nutrition but also motion is carried on by means of the new organs which instinct moves it to create as occasion requires.

Self-reproduction

One would suppose that the activities already mentioned would very nearly exhaust the possibility of the simple cell's life cycle, but there is still another function which is no less important than nutrition and motion, i. e., reproduction. The simple cell is rather the prototype than the imitator of the human being in seeking to reproduce itself. The process reduced absolutely to its simplest terms is a mere division of the cell-body, and that which has been one cell becomes two. It is a matter of no small interest to find reappearing at this point the ubiquitous pseudopodium, for the process of simple division

whereby many cells reproduce themselves is carried on by means of the new arm which we have already discovered to be responsible for nutrition and motion. The protuberance from the side of the cell gradually accentuates itself until the tenuous ligament joining it to the parent body finally becomes severed, and the organ of initiative, adventure, and ministry embarks upon the highest adventure of all in the formation of a new cell.

A Life Cycle

This then is the life cycle of the simple cell: nutrition, motion, reproduction. Food, exercise, rebirth—and the instinctive out-reaching of its protoplasm as it springs to do the bidding of the dictates of life's urgings and necessities, twisting itself into new forms and organs in the process, is the active agent of all.

The Amœba's Message

It is a far, far cry from the protozoan to the life of man, highly differentiated and developed through ages of experience; but in these days of confusion, when men's thinking is beclouded by the very multiplicity of life's developing phenomena, it is worth while to return to the simple general principles of animate life exemplified in

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

the protozoan to see whether it has a message which will serve to clear the atmosphere and chart the terrain of a more complicated world.

III

The Amœba and the Church-member

The instincts, feelings, and practices of the protozoan are illustrative of certain phases of the Christian life; likewise its illnesses and aberrations from the normal bear striking resemblance to the spiritual weakness and failure of great numbers of the members of the Christian church.

Healthy Souls

I am not pessimistic about the life of the church. I believe there are thousands upon thousands of healthy souls, the physiological processes of whose inner lives are proceeding normally and bearing right relations to the world in which they live. The progress of the kingdom work in the world is a demonstration of this, for one cannot have the fruits of living processes, unless those processes are being carried on normally.

Invalids in the Christian Home

It cannot be denied, however, that there are many members within the church today who fail

to function according to the norm of the life of Christ. They are the invalids on the couches of the Christian home, the defectives whom we are carrying as a handicap in the midst of the world battle. But this is the age of health. In the physical world we have entered upon an era when it is not only pleasant but fashionable to be healthy, and many of those invalid couches in our homes which were formerly occupied are now vacant, for we are learning the laws of life. Equally there is no good reason why our church should carry spiritual invalids. Let it become fashionable to enjoy robust spiritual health. It is perfectly possible to achieve a spiritual fitness analogous to the physical vigor presented by the modern athlete.

The Physiology of the Inner Life

A classification of those laws of spiritual health which parallel the normal physiological processes of the body, and which may perhaps fitly be termed the physiology of the inner life, should be helpful in leading us to a correct understanding of the basis of soul health, and even the humble amœba may be of some service in aiding us to comprehend those laws in their simplest form.

II

NUTRITION

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

"We will go too," said they.

So they set out and went on board their boat; but they caught nothing that night. When, however, day was now dawning, Jesus stood on the beach, though the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. He called to them.

"Children," He said, "have you any food there?"

"No," they answered.

"Throw the net in on the right hand side," He said, "and you will find fish."

So they threw the net in, and now they could scarcely drag it along for the quantity of fish. This made the disciple whom Jesus loved say to Peter, "It is the Master."

Simon Peter therefore, when he heard the words, "It is the Master," drew on his fisherman's shirt—for he had not been wearing it—put on his girdle, and sprang into the water. But the rest of the disciples came in the small boat (for they were not far from land—only about a hundred yards off), dragging the net full of fish.

As soon as they landed, they saw a charcoal fire, burning there, with fish broiling on it, and bread close by. Jesus told them to fetch some of the fish which they had just caught. So Simon Peter went on board the boat and drew the net ashore full of large fish, 153 in number; and yet, although there were so many, the net had not broken.

"Come this way and have breakfast," said Jesus.

But not one of the disciples ventured to question Him as to who He was, for they felt sure that it was the Master.—*John 21 : 3-12.*

NUTRITION

The Hungry Amœba

The most basic of physiological processes, and one which is shared alike by primitive as well as highly developed forms of animal life, is the function of nutrition. The cycle of the nutritive function of the amœba is simple. It grows hungry; appetite asserts itself; a felt need. There is a desire for satisfaction of the need. An outward urging in the granules of its protoplasm appears. The pseudopodium is thrust out, grasping the nutritive particle. The latter is absorbed into the body of the cell, resulting in its alimentation and growth.

The Meal Prepared by the Master

Similarly the nutritive processes of the spiritual life are felt, expressed, and satisfied. Appetite is one of the first manifestations of life, and sooner or later in every soul where spiritual life is present, hunger will appear. Even on the physical plane, the Lord recognized the importance of hunger. What more touching picture is contained

in the Gospel narrative than that which presents Jesus standing on the seashore in the dim gray of the morning beside the flickering fire, whereon his own glorified hands had laid fish that they might broil for the satisfaction of the physical hunger of those loved ones of his, whom he had appointed to meet him there?

Whetting the Appetite

So he has used the homely illustration of the appetite to speak of that attitude towards himself which renders men capable of receiving the satisfaction which he himself has provided for the needs of the spirit; and as the one perfect remedy for hunger and thirst is their satisfaction, so he has promised that the soul which cometh to him shall never hunger, and the one which believeth on him shall never thirst. He seems indeed to have drawn a happy distinction between hunger and appetite in indicating the permanent removal of the one, while the other is but whetted by communion with him, as in the case of Mary, who sat at his feet and was commended for having chosen the better part.

Appetite an Indication of Life

The lack of this primitive indication of life is a signal of deadly danger. This is why the Lord

spoke in positive terms of the blessedness of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. David expressed the same primitive need when he said, "My soul thirsteth for God." The appetite is there and is the best possible proof that life is present in the individual. Loss of appetite, whether it be in the amoeba or the church-member, is a sign of fatal weakness which, if not promptly remedied, may eventuate in actual loss of life. It is a symptom and not a disease, but promptly robs both cell and man of their proper functions.

The Aliment of the Soul

The proper aliment of the human soul is God and righteousness. Every time the soul reaches out toward the Highest, and apprehends some new principle of truth or God, it becomes nourished and attains a stronger hold on life. The best apologetic for the Bible as the word of God is that countless souls by feeding upon it have attained a robust spiritual existence. It could hardly be otherwise when every page is instinct with the divine life, and those thoughts which have nourished men's souls through the ages have here been crystallized and set down in living words and phrases forever. It is "every word of God" which builds the tissue of the soul.

Looking for a Meal

Appetite being present, it is nothing less than a foregone conclusion that the individual feeling the pangs of hunger will reach out in the direction of the nutriment which will satisfy its primitive need. The out-reaching is as instinctive and automatic in the spiritual life of man as in the protoplasm of the amoeba. Let there be the stirring of a spiritual existence, and the soul automatically seeks its natural aliment. "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him." The soul itself recognizes that its satisfaction is to be found not in things, but in a person, and it looks for the heavenly manna. No higher claim to an unique Divinity was ever made by Christ than when he said, "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed" (John 6 : 55). "He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness" (Ps. 107 : 9).

The Right Place to Seek Food

But for a practical satisfaction of its appetite, the soul must seek its food in the right direction. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork," but neither of them offers in plain terms the life and power of God as revealed in the life and words of his Son; so that the individual who pre-

sumes to seek the spirit's nutriment merely by communion with nature on Sunday automobile trips, would be very likely to present a lean and hungry appearance were it possible to photograph his spiritual physiognomy.

Sources of Supply

The natural sources of food supply for the human soul are three: the services of worship connected with the Christian church, which is the nursery of the soul, established by Christ, among other reasons, for the purpose of throwing about the new-born the tender care needful for continued existence and growth; personal study of the book wherein is concentrated the great store of spiritual wealth garnered throughout the ages; and thirdly, direct contact with the source of all spiritual nutriment. In plain terms, the hunger of the soul will be satisfied by attendance upon Christian worship, by study of the Scriptures, and by prayer and communion with Him who is the source of life.

Predigested Pabulum

The soul which presents the glow of spiritual health will seek its nutriment in all three directions. Our churches are filled with great numbers of spiritually underdeveloped souls, who

have failed to attain the capacity of going for themselves to the sources of supply to satisfy a growing appetite. They have formed the habit of coming to church, Sunday by Sunday, expecting to receive their week's rations, neglecting the duty of supplementing further their supplies of provender by foraging for themselves. They are content to remain spoon-fed infants, existing upon the predigested preparations of the Sunday sermon which formed the natural beginnings of their nutrition, but which, if persisted in to the exclusion of a more robust diet gathered for themselves, is bound to give rise to a condition of malnutrition and arrested development.

Tenement Children

[There is perhaps nothing more pitiable in the physical realm, than those little undersized, wizened denizens of the crowded tenement districts of our great cities. Children with large heads, hollow eyes, protruding abdomens, and attenuated limbs. Children whose physical appearance cries aloud of imperfect or insufficient feeding. The careless, haphazard feeding of the tenements will never develop in the childish frame the winsome curves and wholesome color of healthy childhood, and when these unsanitary conditions have so affected the growth of the child that the

ill-nourished brain ceases development, and the intellect, which should be putting forth vigorous promise for the future, remains in a partially developed state, the condition is pitiable indeed.

Arrested Development

Arrested development in the spiritual life is, however, one of the commonest phenomena found in the Christian church. Lives, which in the first happiness of a new spiritual experience, have given promise of a maturer development of broad usefulness, present in a spiritual sense all the symptoms of the gutter child, whose physical development is stunted as a result of insufficient food.

Meat for the Soul

It is apparent that no vigorous, healthy, spiritual growth can be hoped for apart from earnest and persistent study of the word of God. In the truest sense, the book which we call the Bible is meat for the soul. It contains the highest possible exposition of the great principles of moral and spiritual growth, and the soul that constantly receives and meditates upon the truths thus revealed, absorbs them into his spiritual consciousness. The principles of the word are sown in the soil of the conscious mind, they penetrate to

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

the subconscious, there they germinate and govern the trend of all subsequent thinking.

Spiritual Digestion

The "stuff" of the living word is spiritual nutriment. It becomes assimilated by the digestive apparatus of the soul, passes into the circulation, and appears again as the substance of which the character is built and the energy wherewith life's activities are manifested.

Stunted Spirits

Rob the spirit of its natural food, and every physical symptom of arrested development is paralleled in the spiritual life. The soul becomes mean and undersized. Its characteristics are small and feeble, instead of generous and vigorous. The character of the individual is rendered repulsive, rather than winsome and genial.

Learning How to Feed

But the soul must be taught to feed upon the word. The situation is similar to that found in the physical realm. Breast-feeding is natural for a time, but only until the time comes when the robust child learns to feed itself. The average new convert does not know how to study the Bible. He needs constant help from those who

are older. We ought not to expect this situation to continue, however. He should learn to use his imagination, to grasp the great needs of life and find the correlative truth between the covers of the book. He should learn to interpret the word in terms of an answer to his own need. It would be an excellent thing if every Christian upon uniting with the church were placed in a small Bible-study group. Not the ordinary Sunday School class, but a group limited in number, meeting for earnest study and frank discussion, with the express purpose of relating the word to the phenomena of life.

The Right Way to Use the Bible

There is a marked difference between the individual who has learned to use his Bible intelligently, and the one who has received no such training. The latter finds no appetite for it, while to the former its pages are instinct with life. To the one, it is a mere collection of words, set down ages ago by men whose lives were utterly unrelated to his own; while the other colors its pages with the kaleidoscopic hues of his own varying experience. The difference between the two is that one reads it dully and formally, while the other interprets it by using his imagination to fit the eternal principle to his present need.

The Pseudopodium of the Soul

The imagination is the organ whereby the nutriment of the word is extracted. It is the pseudopodium of the soul. Its application to the pages of the Scriptures will make the old, familiar stories live again.

Peter in Prison

We have read the account of Peter in prison repeatedly, and it has made little impression on us. Read it again, and think of Peter lying asleep with the chains about his ankles and wrists, chafing raw places in the skin. Think of the two soldiers by his side, stirred by his every motion, sentinels alert to prevent escape. Now think whether there is no Peter in your own soul chained by habit which chafes and injures the spirit life. Think whether the spirit within has not struggled against its fetters until weariness has caused it to cease the apparently useless strife, and fling itself in torpor to quiescence between its captors? Imagine then, the heavenly vision of One who stands by us in the prison-cell of our own soul's captivity, and speaking the word of power, causes us to arise, and lo, we find ourselves upon our feet with the chains gone and the guards overpowered by a higher force, while we pursue the angel form to the streets where service awaits us.

Thus Peter's story becomes fiber to the soul; we apprehend it for ourselves, it passes into the realm of the subconscious where the processes of mental and spiritual digestion take place, and then it emerges in moral muscle, girt for the task and ready to function normally in the spiritual frame.

Spiritual Initiative

It takes spiritual initiative to project one's own life into the printed page and emerge with the prey clasped in one's grasp. One is reminded of the wheeling gulls, poising themselves above the spray of the ocean surf, their sharp eyes fixed upon the surface of the water, alert to dart through the sparkling drops and seize upon whatever edible morsel their penetrating vision may discern, shaking the foam from their wings as they rise exultant, clutching their prey in their talons. Many of the most stimulating and helpful thoughts of the Bible are veiled from the casual glance by the archaic language of the ordinary version, and no one can truly interpret its message until the need of his soul shall drive him to an earnest search for that satisfying nutriment which he lacks. It is well to form the habit of consulting different versions, especially the modern translations, such as Weymouth and Moffat.

Loss of Appetite

Anorexia, or loss of appetite, is found in the individual cell, as well as in the organism as a whole. There are certain cells in the human body, whose function is to combat the hordes of invading bacteria, which cause disease. This they do by actually swallowing them up, digesting, and disposing of them. In certain morbid states these cells lose their appetite and fail to attack the enemy, thus leaving the body a prey to the inroads of disease.

Opsonins

The appetite of these cells is stimulated, however, by certain principles in the blood called opsonins. If the opsonins are not present in force, the cells will perform but feebly their function. Loss of appetite is as common a symptom in the spiritual as in the physical realm. We need to develop the opsonins within our souls by deliberately breaking with the insidious sloth which bids us be satisfied with the commonplaces of the Christian life, when spiritual initiative and the determined use of the imagination will place at our command the rich stores of spiritual nutriment contained in the word. It requires a definite effort to grasp the hidden meanings of the Scriptures, but this effort, having been faithfully put

forth, will build within us that spiritual tissue which shall clothe the skeleton of our meager souls with muscles capable of moral wrestling and constructive activity.

The Miracle of Christ's Feeding

The normal soul will find its aliment in public worship and in personal study of that volume which is the great source of all spiritual strength, but there is one other source of spiritual nutrition which must not be neglected, and that is personal communion with Him who is the bread of life. God speaks his words, which are spirit and life, to our souls by means of the message from another, and by means of the printed page, but also by that direct personal impression which comes to every soul which is willing to put itself into the place where the One who fed the five thousand can work again the miracle of the loaves and fishes and nourish our own souls.

Personal communion, however, follows the lines of thought leading out from the word. The Christian who consecrates his imagination to the understanding of God and his word, will go far towards a sympathetic interpretation of the eternal principles of the life of God in the colloquial of commonplace human life. He will be led out into the depths of comprehension of the Al-

mighty, so that the inner paths of thought and communion which ramify through the depths of every man's spirit become luminous with the joy-giving radiance of the Master's presence, and he will know the peace and poignant satisfaction of a heart whose inmost motives are continually governed and directed by the Lord of all hearts. He will find also that these channels of "union and communion" with God radiate from those great thoughts which have been crystallized for us in the book. So that after all, the three sources of the soul's alimentation—the spoken word in public worship, the written word in private Bible study, and the direct contact of our spirits with the Holy Spirit of God—have their focus in the revealed word.

Steps in the Soul's Feeding

It is worth while to remember the steps which will insure a normal alimentation of the soul: a good appetite, preserved by putting ourselves in the way of its satisfaction; the outreach of the imagination, the pseudopodium of the soul, in the direction of the three sources of food supply—the ministry of the word in public worship, the private appropriation of the Bible as our own proper nutriment, and direct contact with the Interpreter and Revealer of all truth.

III

MOTION

“ ‘ My Father works unceasingly, and so do I ! ’ ” . . .
“ In most solemn truth I tell you,” replied Jesus, “ ‘ that the Son can do nothing of Himself—He can only do what He sees the Father doing; for whatever He does, that the Son does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son and reveals to Him all that He Himself is doing.’ ”—*John 5 : 17-20.*

“ The very work which I am doing—affords testimony concerning me that the Father has sent me.”—*John 5 : 36.*

“ We must do the works of Him who sent me while there is daylight. Night is coming on, when no one can work.”—*John 9 : 4.*

MOTION

Motion Dependent upon Nutrition

The second function of the protozoan is motion. This is dependent absolutely upon nutrition. While the immediate result of unsatisfied hunger is likely to be energetic activity; nevertheless if nutrition fails beyond a brief time, the activity ceases, the motions become sluggish and finally disappear, leading to a condition resulting in death and ultimate dissolution.

The Weakness of Hunger

In the human system the weakness of prolonged hunger is sometimes pathetic. The mental processes may be abnormally quickened, leading to a ready grasp of the necessity for action, but the weakness of the system from continued starvation renders the muscles incapable of accomplishing the bidding of the brain. The life becomes futile, profound discouragement results, which gradually obtunds the brain, dulls the spirit, and leads to a breakdown of all the body processes

Telegraphing for Supplies

Just as the chemical reaction in every granule of the protoplasm of the simple cell sets up an imperative call for the needed additions of tissue-building material, so the cells of the human body echo the cry and telegraph frantically to headquarters for supplies. Foraging bands of cells are sent out, and if nutriment is not forthcoming from the proper source, they may feed upon the surplus store of adipose tissue found in the system itself.

Food and Energy

When the response has been obtained and the foraging bands have returned to camp with abundant quantities of the needed ration, satisfying the clamant voices of the hungry troop, the natural outcome of satisfied appetite is to convert the nutriment into tissue and energy. The amoeba, whose appetite has been satisfied, grows rotund and waves active arms in moving from one place to another. The human system, which has been supplied with food, assimilates the nutriment and by means of it covers its bony framework with fat and muscle, and manufactures stores of energy which lead to multifarious activities. The replenished army commissariat means a forward movement upon the enemy's entrenchments.

Hungry Souls Cannot Work

So in the spirit life the physiology of the amoeba and of the human frame is faithfully reproduced: activity depends entirely upon nutrition. There will be no motion without food and no service without the foregoing satisfaction of spiritual appetite. Is not the complaint too frequently heard, "I come away from the services hungry and dissatisfied." Let it be well noted that the hungry and dissatisfied soul never yet produced activities of value in the church life. What an emphatic call to ministers is this, to base their public ministry upon the true aliment of the soul prepared and waiting in the book of God. Similarly there is a hint to such dependent souls to realize that they may go to the source of supply and "buy for themselves."

Regular Meals

But having received the needful food, whether through public worship, private study, or direct communion, or ideally, through all three, there comes the natural corollary of nutrition, which is activity, expressed in the amoeba by motion. There is no more edifying and inspiring phenomenon in the world than that of a normal Christian functioning healthily and happily in the spiritual body of the church; taking his meals regularly

at the Sunday services and prayer-meeting, foraging for himself among the rich pastures of the word, apprehending the divine life by living communion with the Source of life, and then, having digested and assimilated the food provided, elaborating it in the chemical laboratory of the inner life into tissue for the upbuilding of character and energy for the activities of the spirit life.

Digesting the Meal

There is a shadowy realm within the spirit of man whence arise intuitions and impulses, sudden convictions that we ought to take a certain course of action, as well as deliberate purposes arising out of long consideration and carefully balanced judgments. This dim labyrinth of the inner life is but just beginning to be explored by the new psychology. Its laws are being formulated, its paths mapped, and in some cases its derangements corrected. But this realm of the inner spirit has never been wholly obscure to the Christian soul. It is the region of spiritual digestion. The soul apprehends a new spiritual truth; it becomes food for the inner life. The new idea falls into the region of the subconscious, and is acted upon and reacted upon by the digestive ferments of the spirit until it becomes fitted for absorption in the life of the soul.

Building the Tissue of the Soul

In its transformed state it then goes to build up the tenuous but tenacious tissue of the soul and appears in developed character, so that, when the occasion arises, that very same spiritual idea through the medium of intuition or impulse will suddenly appear as high and noble action elicited by some great emergency of life; or perchance, having been wrought into the warp and woof of the soul, will appear as a new habit of godlike tenderness or grace in the active relations of the individual with others.

The Bread-line

There is a statement in the word to the effect that Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked. A much commoner phenomenon in the life of the church is for its member to wax fat and stop kicking. An entirely false conception of the function of the church seems to have been abroad. This erroneous view has been expressed in the traditional call of the church to the unconverted. The invitation has been to a well-spread table: "Come and be filled"; "Come and receive."

The Battle-front

Whereas the actual call of the Master is not to the bread-line, but to the battle-front. The

commissary department is not the element of prime importance in the prosecution of the campaign, but is rather contributory to the main end, which is advance against the enemy. Volunteers are enlisted to fight, and incidentally they are assured that they will be fed. The one who refuses to fight will very soon find himself cut off from the privileges of the trench kitchen. An army travels upon its stomach, but the traveling is the essential feature, and the stomach is cultivated to that end. The propaganda of many a church reminds one of those alluring enlistment pictures we used formerly to see which told of the soldier's pay, the good time he was going to have, the countries he would see. But it is improbable that this method has ever secured the enlistment of any great number of desirable recruits.

Christian Inertia

The great call to the battle is the call to sacrifice for a great cause, and the men of today are not wanting in the heroic element which responds to such an appeal. Is it not possible that the inertia of the average Christian is due to a fundamental misapprehension upon uniting with the church? He was impressed with the peace, joy, and comfort which church-membership would

mean to him, and little was said of the active battle which the church is waging against the entrenched forces of evil in the world, and of the solemn obligation he was taking of engaging earnestly in the strife. Hence he unites with the church obsessed with the belief that his churchly duty lies in faithfully occupying his pew Sunday by Sunday, while the pastor earnestly distributes the weekly supply of spiritual food.

A Nest of Swallows

I am reminded of a nest of young swallows which we once observed through a period of weeks. The parent birds had built their nest under the eaves of a tiny Japanese house in Yokohama. We were guests in the home of a missionary who lived on the summit of the bluff. Descending the long flight of steps which led to the native city, we came upon this nest of little fledglings. The Japanese who occupied the house, were evidently very kind to the little birds and got into the way of dropping small pieces of food into the hungry mouths. The birds became so accustomed to this treatment that they began to expect it, and upon the approach of a footstep, open would go every mouth, the jaws stretched to such a voracious extent that they seemed indeed all mouth.

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

A Sunday Congregation

It has often occurred to me that this is a pretty fair picture of the average Sunday-morning congregation. The pews are filled with decorous churchgoers, the pastor has prepared his very best for them and is ready to give of his brain, his private study of the word, his erudition, and his ripe experience of contact with human life. He enters the pulpit and, at least metaphorically, opens every mouth, and the birds are awaiting the choice morsels which he has laboriously prepared for their nutriment. But normally this feeding process is not perpetual. There comes a time when, if the little fledglings do not make an effort to fly, the mother bird will shoulder them out of the nest, and they will be left to shift for themselves.

Sermon-tasters

The capacity to receive prepared food, which a great many Christians manifest, is little short of marvelous. They are fully content to sit Sunday after Sunday complacently awaiting the ministrations of their spiritual wet-nurse, and the various comments upon the discourse will indicate a very nice and critical taste. They become capable of intelligently criticizing the ablest sermonizers of the land. These are they who when a

church is without a pastor, make it well-nigh impossible for more honest souls to fill the vacant place. They have become what is known as "sermon-tasters," and can find something to criticize unfavorably in the most able discourse.

An Anemic Soul

There are three terrible spiritual illnesses which affect those who achieve the pernicious habit of constantly hearing the word without an earnest effort to do it. Assimilation may fail, and they may die of inanition or anemia. There will be manifest a gradual loss of appetite, failure to attend the services, weakness of response to the stimuli of the Christian faith, entire failure to participate in the activities of the church, finally, loss of spiritual sensation, and death. What a large number of pale, anemic Christians there are in the church! They remind one of the delicate anemone trembling in the breeze, rather than the brilliant, ruddy poppy glorifying the landscape. They have no message of Christian hope and cheer for those without. They suffer like all victims of anemia, from cold extremities, and lack that warmth of handclasp and virile Christian personality which is an invitation to feebler souls to seek the same source of spiritual vigor. The anemic Christian wins no soul to God.

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

Autointoxication

In the second case, the situation is closely analogous to a similar condition in the physical system of the human body. Overfeeding and under-activity induce a condition known as autointoxication. The body finds it impossible to dispose naturally of all the nutriment provided for it. Faulty metabolism results in the manufacture from the food of poisonous products which affect the body seriously in many ways, lessening efficiency, dulling the intellect, and producing a train of unhappy symptoms all too familiar to the chronic dyspeptic. In the spiritual realm, the law that food is given for the purpose of building the body and furnishing power for work is enforced as inexorably as in the physical, and the Christian who constantly feeds but fails to work, will inevitably suffer from a condition of spiritual autointoxication. The outraged system manufactures deadly poisons from the unused nutritive material, and we find developed peculiar forms of religious experience such as Christian Science, Dowieism, singular interpretations of prophecy, and the like.

Spiritual Obesity

The third evil which threatens the church-member who fails to engage in definite and regu-

lar activity, is overproduction of adipose tissue. Nutritive material is provided to be transformed into the tissue of character and the energy of service. The violation of this law results in the deposit of the surplus of food about the spiritual anatomy, and the individual becomes a victim of spiritual obesity. His religion is an unctuous deposit beneath the surface of the skin, rather than the fabric of his soul's life. He is ready with the pious phraseology of a second-hand religion. His prayers are in the set terms of the spiritual experience of others. He goes through the motions of Christian service without putting the force of his spiritual life behind them. In the physical realm, the overproduction of fat may involve danger to the very life of the individual. The fat cells not only accumulate beneath the skin, but infiltrate the substance of the cardiac muscle, so that every heart-beat requires the lifting of pounds of useless tissue. So the platitudes of habitual piety may lie about the heart of the spirit, weighing it down like the millstone of which the Master spoke. The way to avoid all this is very simple. Let nutrition be followed by motion. Use to the utmost extent the aliment received in the development of character and in active service. This is the pathway of health. The two walk hand in hand: food and exercise.

A First-class Egoist

The rudimentary activities of the protozoan which are expressed in simple movements of its "false limbs" (pseudopodia) become in the highly differentiated life of the human being the manifold activities made possible by the fine co-ordination of the groups of well-developed muscles with which the latter's real limbs are provided. The protozoan is a first-class egoist. All its activities are grouped about the necessity for supplying its own bodily wants.

The Element of Altruism

But in the physical development of the human, the altruistic element has been added, and while much of his activity has to do with the supply of his own personal need, nevertheless there has appeared a relationship to the need of others, and his chief activity may indeed center about the wants of some other creature. Pursuing the same idea into the spiritual realm, the chief end of activity is found to have lost its egoistic features and the spirit labors not for its own preservation, but vicariously for the life and safety of others. True it is that the individual's life and growth depend intimately upon motion even in the spirit life, but Christian service does not consist in a series of spiritual gymnastics for the purpose of strength-

ening the muscles of the soul. It is rather the spontaneous outgoing of the inner life in effort to develop within others the same spiritual vigor in which it rejoices.

Dumb Christians

It is a common phenomenon in our churches today to observe members in "good and regular standing" who, so far as any active Christian service is concerned, seem to be entirely devoid of fruit. They are like those naked poles which sometimes rear themselves in the midst of a bamboo thicket, leafless and bare among the group of foliage-adorned trunks. In the Philippines these leafless trunks are called *cana muda*, "dumb bamboo," an accurate picture of the "dumb Christian." It is not always true, however, that spiritual desire has died out of such hearts. It is sometimes the case that they have failed to grasp what Christian service means and do not know how to go about the task of expressing their own spiritual lives in active service. Just as the keynote of Christian activity, as distinguished from motion of other sorts, is altruism, so the spirit must comprehend the life and needs of others before it can actively express itself in supplying those needs. "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

Put Yourself in His Place

There is only one way whereby one may enter into another's necessity, and that is by projecting one's own spirit into the life and surroundings of one's brother. To consider the circumstances of another as though they were our own, is the method which will enable us to do Christian service effectively, and thus the function of imagination again enters into our thinking as the active agent whereby we may comprehend another's need, place ourselves in his situation, and help him solve the problem of his own difficult circumstances and environment. It is utterly futile to expect to affect another by anything short of a real study of his need and a sympathetic effort to range oneself alongside of him in the bearing of his burden.

Comprehension through the Imagination

This is the truest kind of spiritual activity, and its active agent is again, as in the case of nutrition, the pseudopodium of the soul, imagination. Really to grasp another's need by means of the imagination, one must needs make a deliberate effort, get outside of oneself, and live for others. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself." It is the crucial point where many fail, and often the failure is due to the fact that

the Christian has not realized that the whole end of his being is service, or realizing this, has failed to grasp the fact that the method of Christian service is the consecration of the imagination to a comprehension of the whole life of the needy brother, a self-giving which shall result in the highest degree of self-realization. "He that loseth his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall keep it unto life eternal." "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

The Soul's Activities

The physiology of the soul's activities may be summed up thus: No soul can engage in active Christian service unless it is receiving regular and sufficient nourishment. Food is taken, not for personal satisfaction, but for character-building and service. Service involves a sympathetic comprehension of the need of others by the outreach of the imagination into their lives and circumstances. The robust soul is the one that feeds daily upon the words of the Master, and brings to others the same blessing and help that these words have brought to him.

IV.

REPRODUCTION

The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. In most solemn truth I tell you that unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains what it was—a single grain; but that if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. He who holds his life dear, is destroying it; and he who makes his life of no account in this world shall keep it to the Life of the Ages. If a man wishes to be my servant, let him follow me; and where I am, there too shall my servant be. If a man wishes to be my servant, the Father will honour him.—*John 12 : 23-26.*

REPRODUCTION

Hating One's Life and Keeping It

The protozoan more nearly approaches the altruistic principle of self-giving in the function of reproduction than in any other way, and even here the gospel principle of self-realization through self-denial is demonstrated. "He that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." The perpetuity of the species depends upon the inexorable law whereby the individual parts with a portion of its life to bring about the life of another.

The Pain of Reproduction

It is probable that reproduction is always associated with pain. What rudimentary discomfort the simple cell undergoes in the process of reproducing its kind we may not know, but it is not difficult to imagine that the pinching of its protoplasm and the contraction of its cell substance as the projection from its body becomes more and more pronounced, may be anything but a pleasant process, and when the supreme moment

comes for the division of that tenuous ligament, still joining the newly forming organism to its parent cell, it is not perhaps calling too freely upon the imagination to believe that the protoplasm of the cell-body feels the keen stab of a momentary anguish as the final shreds are torn asunder and the little new life is born.

A World Process

What a conception of the universe this gives us! The suffering of a myriad infinitesimal pains as minute lives emerge moment by moment through all the world! And these birth-pangs are accentuated according to the rise of the individual in the scale of development. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

The Upward Trend of the Pathway of Pain

But the complementary truth brings a balm for the suffering which renders it a bitter-sweet experience more to be desired than any other on earth. The gropings of the soul into the future and all the hidden potentialities which prophesy of better days to come—higher grades of personal development, nobler social organization, the elimination of the faulty and unfit—are bound up together with this pathway of pain.

The Amœba's Prophecy

The travelling amœba may not translate its rudimentary cerebration into active consciousness, but doubtless there is an instinctive impulse of its being which bids it reach out and beyond itself in the divine attribute of new life creation; and the urging of its granules toward the accomplishment of this, its highest function, is its primal prophecy of ultimate perfection.

The Spiritual Element in Birth-pangs

The experience is universal and runs through all animate nature. The Master voiced it when he said, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, but afterward she remembereth no more her sorrow for joy that a man is born into the world." From creation until now there has been a spiritual element in the pangs of childbirth, expressed in the possibility which lay in the background of every Jewish maiden's thinking, that "the man born into the world" might be the Son of man who should achieve the world's redemption. And with the coming of the Son of man the hope became but more inclusive, in that through him divine potentialities are seen to lie in every frail life which comes to us out of the unknown. The humility of Elizabeth was shown in her words, "Whence is this that the mother of

my Lord should come unto me ”; but beneath the real humility there was a proud consciousness that she also was to give life to one who should be the forerunner of the Lord and have part in changing world currents and uplifting the race of men.

The Best Fruitage of the Spiritual Life

Translated into the spiritual realm, service becomes truly divine and creative when it has to do with the reproductive faculty. To implant the divine life within the soul of any man is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit alone, but in carrying out the process God has chosen to make use of the word and ministry of his servants, and the spiritual life of any man finds its blossom and fruitage in the highest of all forms of service—spiritual reproduction.

The Superlative of Self-giving

Let it be noted from the analogy of all nature that this high function of the human spirit cannot be accomplished without pain. It is the principle of self-giving raised to the highest degree. The Master referred to this when he said, “ Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ” (John 12 : 24). In some measure reproduction exacts the suffering and

death of the parent organism, and those who refuse to pay the price in deliberate self-abandonment, remain like the sterile grain of wheat upon the shelf, barren and forsaken, abiding alone.

Flouting Nature

One of the most pitiable sights upon the face of the earth is the wilfully barren individual, and one of the ugliest phenomena of the present day ultra-civilization is threatened race-suicide, wherever it may be found. It amounts to a stultification of one's own being—a denial of the fundamental good attaching to every existing organism. It flouts nature to her face and says in effect, "Yes, indeed, personally I exist, but I place so little value upon existence that by my example I would advocate that my species perish from the face of the earth with the closing of my own miserable life."

The Barren Christian

But what of the barren Christian who fails to reproduce his spiritual kind? A terrible menace to the life of the church is the prevalence of those who are willing to browse in the pastures of the blest, perchance to perform perfunctory duties connected with the routine of church life, but who fail at the crucial point of permitting God to

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

make use of them in imparting to others the divine life of which they have been made partakers.

Reproduction a Complex Process

The production of new spiritual life is a complex process. It is probable that in very few cases is it given to an individual to initiate and bring to its conclusion that chain of circumstances and impulses which eventually results in soul-awakening. It is infinitely true of the whole matter, that Paul plants, Apollos waters, but it is God who gives the increase. In many a case the early influence of a mother's faithful words and prayer will lie dormant for years, to be awakened to active life by the incisive message from pulpit or pew in later years. It frequently takes the cumulative effect of multitudes of differing impacts to bring about the culminating day when the gross shadows break away and the soul comes into the light.

Christ's Preeminent Message

The rediscovery of Christ's preeminent message to the church, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," has given rise in these days to the definite conscious movement for reproduction of the spiritual life in the soul of every man throughout the entire

world, and this is comprehended in the modern missionary movement.

Cooperative Reproduction

The reaction in this case is an especially complicated one. Its conception is in the heart of the man with the broad world vision; it involves the cooperative movement of hundreds and thousands of the Master's followers, under the leadership of those who have been given a realization of the capabilities of divine sonship in peoples of alien race far removed geographically from the parent group. It requires organization, transportation, a physical plant, wise planning, and imaginative outreach. And back of it earnest souls give loyal cooperation in large faith and sacrificial offering.

The Magic of Money

The magic of money is involved in it. We should entirely divest ourselves of the feeling that there is anything unspiritual about this phase of the church's great reproductive function. The term "filthy lucre" becomes a misnomer when applied to the crystallized and minted powers of God's people. It is the concrete product of brain and brawn, outlook, daring, energy, patience, perseverance, and toil. Brought to the Master's

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

service, it becomes an essential element in that great incubative process which is to result not in the transplanting of the mother church abroad, but in the creation of an indigenous Christian body in far lands.

Travail Associated with Every Step

And about all these various elements in the life-producing process there exists that travail which is the purchase price of the rare treasure of new life. The vision in the heart of him who conceives a foreign mission is the same as that of Him who "so loved the world that he gave." The details of organization and equipment which require adjustment and counter-adjustment, sacrifice here and self-giving there, are burdened all along the way with the travail of men and women who carry the service as a labor of love. The actual money which forms the vehicle for transmission of the vital impulse is freighted with the prayer-expressed desire amounting in multitudes of cases to definite soul-travail for other spirits whose lives are being lived in far distant lands and among far different environments.

A Natural Phenomenon

Response to the stimulus of world vision is a natural phenomenon in the Christian life. It

could not well be otherwise. The Master's mission was life-imparting: "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." It was world-wide in its scope and embraced "every man that cometh into the world." Ours is identical; "as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The anti- or non-missionary Christian, therefore, is an anomaly. The world-wide missionary enterprise is a phase of cooperative Christian reproduction, and the so-called Christian who has no personal and financial relation to it, is sterile. He is a drone in the world hive, doomed to extinction.

A Whole-hearted Response

Nor may the true follower of the Master bear a merely nominal relationship to the cause. Great causes should elicit no half-hearted service. It is a current theory that the missionary call comes to a few elect souls of peculiar piety. Such a theory violates the biological basis of the spiritual life. We are impelled by the nature of our being to the largest self-development. This means the investment of our powers in the most needy place.

The First Question

The first question then for the Christian who feels within himself the reproducing impulse is,

“Where is the greatest need?” And having decided, as a candid study of world conditions must lead one to decide, that it lies among those seething millions of the Oriental races whose ethnic religions have lost all trace of spiritual life and power, the next logical question is, “Am I fitted to go, physically, educationally, spiritually?” If so, the loyal response of the loving heart brings yet another recruit to the forces of the great enterprise.

The Man Who Cannot Go

But if providential circumstances, in social connection, physical or mental equipment, or otherwise, should render it impossible, this does not render barren the individual life as regards the great cooperative world reproductive function. The logic of the situation leads the honest Christian much further, and the next question naturally arises, “Are there ways in which I can project my own life into those places of need today while prevented from going in person?” And the reply is obvious. One man gives life; another must give money. They are equally needed links in the chain of circumstances leading to the production of the new life abroad. The man of God is sent forth by the money of God to perform the modern miracles of God.

How Little May I Give?

Nor will the healthy Christian ask himself the question, "How little may I give and satisfy my conscience?" but the impelling force within which governs the instinct of self-propagation will lead him to place his resources as fully at the command of the Master as his brother who goes, and he will live a life at home which is such that while his personal service is exerted in his own sphere for the purpose of implanting the life of Christ in individuals, his crystallized powers in the form of financial aid are devoted entirely, beyond the common needs of his daily life and of those who are dependent upon him, to this other form of reproduction which may be called cooperative, in that it involves the joint efforts of thousands of his fellows, and thus he becomes just as truly a missionary—even a foreign missionary—as his brother whose sphere is abroad.

The Prodigality of Nature

In no other manifestation of life is nature so prodigal as in connection with the reproductive function. Limitless potentialities are bound up in the individual. The simple cell may divide and redivide endlessly, the single seed will bring forth some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold. Nature has lavished bountiful riches

upon both vegetable and animal worlds in an apparent determination to secure the perpetuity of the species. So in the spiritual world vigorous souls beget their kind in an unending succession, and besides the intricate series of interrelationships and extended impulses which carry on the cooperative reproductive function of the church's life—the great missionary enterprise—are those personal contacts of soul with soul in which life passes from one to another.

Reaching the Individual

It is the obligation and high privilege of every Christian, not only to have part in the great world enterprises, which involve cooperative work with his fellow Christians, but also so to place himself under the guidance of the Spirit of God that he may be used to help in implanting the life of Christ in the hearts of those other individuals with whom his immediate environment brings him in personal contact.

Spiritual Sonship

One may never know all the factors which have entered into the rebirth of any single soul, but most regenerated men bear the definite relationship of spiritual sonship to some other who has made their salvation a matter of special solicitude.

Forming Christ in Others

This phase of spiritual reproduction is not brought about without the pangs of soul-travail. "My little children," writes Paul, "of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." It was of serious concern to him that Christ life should be reproduced truly in his followers, so much so that he even goes so far as almost to wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. Surely this is the true spirit of parenthood, which is willing in giving life to a new spirit to impart its own soul also, if by so doing the normal development of the other may be secured.

The Part of the Imagination

Here again the consecrated Christian imagination is seen to play a very special part. It is the pseudopodium of the soul, and its outreach makes possible both the collective reproductive activity of the church life in its great missionary enterprises and the personal self-projection of the individual's own understanding of Christ. Who has ever found himself actively interested in penetrating the great world fields with Christian truth until his imagination has grasped the tremendous need of a Christless social system, and until his mental processes have gripped the situation and

enabled him in some sense at least to identify himself with those who "sit in darkness and the shadow of death?" The true supporter of missions, by his imagination, is made partaker of the very nature of those he would help so that he may bring many sons into glory through a realization of their needs and possibilities.

A Tender Sympathy

Equally he who would affect those about him and lead them to Christ, must get out of himself, use his imagination, and thus form the living link between their situation of need and the One who can satisfy that need. A tender sympathy which leads one to understand the heart of the one who is sought, is a prime requisite for winning men to a new life.

The Exultation of Soul Birth

There is exultation about the moment of soul-birth. No greater joy can come to a human heart than that of ushering into the kingdom of heaven a new life which otherwise might have remained outside those gates of light. The Master coveted the experience for all of his followers. "I have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth." Paul saw the preeminent joy of it: "That ye be neither barren nor unfruitful."

The Crown of Life

To exercise the reproductive function is without doubt the very crown and fulfilment of life. The functions of nutrition and motion are merely preliminary and introductory to the great end of being, which is to pass on to other organisms the fulness of life with all its countless possibilities, that they in their turn may continue the process of multiplication. No true Christian may ever count his life complete until he has had part in this great crowning glory of the spiritual life. "Children are a heritage from the Lord. Blessed is he who hath his quiver full of them."

V

CIRCULATION AND RESPIRATION

I am the Vine—the True Vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser. Every branch in me—if it bears no fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bring forth more fruit. Already ye are cleansed—through the teaching which I have given you. Continue in me, and let me continue in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself—that is, if it does not continue in the vine—so neither can you if you do not continue in me. I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who continues in me and in whom I continue bears abundant fruit.—*John 15 : 1-5.*

CIRCULATION AND RESPIRATION

Higher Physiological Processes

There are certain physiological processes which are the product of much higher stages of differentiation than are found in the simple cell, and as the spiritual life is highly organized we must seek beyond the amœba for the similitude of some of its functions. This is especially true of respiration and circulation. These functions combine the processes whereby the outside atmosphere is brought into vital relationship with the tissues of the body.

“God is Round about Us”

The analogy of both respiration and circulation are more than hinted at in the Scripture. “In him we live and move and have our being” is a direct picture of the soul running its happy course, exercising its God-given powers, and finding its source of life in God as an all-surrounding, all-permeating atmosphere. Truly, “He is not far from every one of us” (Acts 17 : 27). “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? If I take

the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me " (Ps. 139 : 7-10).

The All-sustaining Element

Physiology teaches us the intimate dependence of higher animal life upon the surrounding atmosphere. This dependence is due to the need for oxygen, which the atmosphere imparts to the living organism. Entering the system, the oxygen forms a biochemical combination with certain elements of the blood, it is carried by the circulation through the remotely ramifying system of arteries and capillaries to the ultimate component cells of the body, where it is seized with avidity by the oxygen-hungry tissues and compounded into the substance of the system. Here, in the remote chemical laboratory of the individual cell, wherein inheres the essence of life, it becomes the prime factor in those metabolic changes, some of which we understand well, while others are shrouded in the mystery of nature's magic alchemy, whereby is carried forward the miracle of sustaining and ever-renewing life.

The Atmosphere of the Soul

In the profoundest possible sense God is the atmosphere of the soul. That elixir of eternal

life, which the alchemists of old so vainly sought, is found in him alone. There is a principle of the Divine Nature, call it what you will, which when apprehended by the soul of man becomes to the spirit life precisely what oxygen is to the physical organism. The Master well understood this when he prayed for his disciples that they might know Him, whom to know is life eternal. The psalmist goes almost so far as to describe the biological process when he exclaims in sublime expression of keenest soul desire, "*My heart and my flesh* cry out for the living God." It is the miracle of divine incarnation repeated, that God should come into the human soul, forming not a biochemical, but a biospiritual union with the spiritual elements of man's being.

Telegraphing to Headquarters

There is a sensitive spot at the base of the human brain where are registered the impulses which indicate whether the tissues are sufficiently oxygenated. When the blood has been so robbed of its oxygen by the clamant calls of the body-cells as no longer to be capable of oxygenating the tissues, its venous character impresses upon this spot the vital need of the system. Instantly the mechanism of demand and supply is set in motion, a telegraphic impulse is flashed to the

respiratory and circulating apparatus; the heart beats more forcefully, and the lungs expand more completely, so that the vital fluids are reoxygenated as they come in contact with the atmospheric air through the tenuous medium of the pulmonary membrane. Is not the psalmist expressing the same spiritual process in the verse we have just quoted, "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God"? The whole spiritual man feels the impelling need of the vitalizing power of God's presence, and the insistent appeal expresses itself through the medium of exclamatory prayer. "Oh that I knew where I might find him" (Job 23 : 3). "When shall I come to appear before the presence of God" (Ps. 42 : 2).

A Permanent Function

The Master's teaching exalts this experience, which was apparently only occasional in the life of the Old Testament saints as it is indeed in that of many Christians today, into a permanent function which should be considered normal to the soul and without which no soul can possess a true state of health.

The Circulation of the Vine

He speaks of it under the term of "abiding" and carries out the principle of the circulation by

the figure of the vine and the branches. The branch whose health is normal and which bears much fruit, is the one which abides in the vine. Those vessels which unite it with the life of the parent vine, are open and free, and the vital fluids of the trunk pass uninterruptedly. For a normal life of growth and fruit-bearing there must be more than an occasional transmission of sap from the trunk to the branch. From the very beginning of its existence as a branch it must be so intimately united to the vine that vessel joins vessel and the circulation of the vital fluids is unimpaired. Even a partial separation of the branch from the trunk will render impossible the entire fulfilment of its highest promise in the line of fruit-bearing.

Mutual Indwelling

The Master goes on to elaborate the relationship: "If ye abide in me and I in you." Not only must the branch retain the integrity of its union with the trunk, but constantly there must be the passage of life-elements in the form of nutritive fluids from the trunk to the branch. The branch is wrought into the intimate substance of the vine, fiber embracing fiber, and vessel meeting vessel, while the life essence of the vine itself is found in all its power and fulness rushing through

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

the veins of the branch and bursting into leaf, flower, tendril, and fruit. Each abides within the other, and the perfect plant meets perfectly its divinely appointed use.

The Circulation in Man

The circulation of plant life is not essentially dissimilar to that of the human system. In the latter, connection is made between the current of vital fluids within the system and the encircling atmosphere without, through the medium of the lungs, where the blood is brought into intimate approach to the air by the pulmonary tissues. The blood snatches the oxygen from the air circulating in the pulmonary cells and thus a continuous current of revivifying air is carried through the entire system, uniting the remotest cell of the body with that great ocean of oxygen-imparting atmosphere without.

Respiration

The function of respiration may not and must not be an interrupted one. "If He gather unto himself his spirit, his breath; all flesh shall perish together" (Job 34 : 14, 15). So with abiding, the very life of the Christian depends upon the maintenance of the union between himself and God. The entire cutting off of this connection

could only result in the death of the severed member. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15 : 6).

Air Hunger

It must be recognized, however, that while the connection between the all-embracing spirit life and the spiritual circulation of the individual may not be entirely suspended, it is frequently very greatly impaired. The phenomenon of air hunger is very common among God's children. How frequently the symptoms of this condition in the physical nature are found among those who dwell in crowded tenements! It is different from malnutrition due to insufficient feeding, although its results are somewhat similar, and the two are frequently found to coexist. Air hunger will produce a condition of nervous tension and irritability. There is a pinched appearance to the face, the lips and finger-nails are blue, and the extremities cold, the disposition is apt to be fretful, and the outlook upon life is pessimistic.

Christians Who Lack Air

Similar symptoms are all too common in the life of many Christians. They are pinched and

narrow in their views. Though active in Christian work, they will lack the broad, happy, human sympathy which makes effective their approach to other lives. Their spiritual experience is turbulent. Today they may be rejoicing in the light of a new spiritual uplift, while tomorrow they are depressed and restless, with face expressing all too clearly the dis-ease of their inner experience. Air hunger in the spiritual life comes from an imperfect union of the soul with God.

A Noxious Atmosphere

The Master has offered us the privilege of a life of uninterrupted union with himself; and if such symptoms present themselves, we should scrutinize carefully our own hearts to discover the cause of the imperfect union. It may be because we are living in an atmosphere surcharged with poisonous products. No one can exist permanently in a noxious atmosphere loaded with the deleterious products of other organisms which have exhausted the oxygen of the atmosphere and cast their own poisonous exhalations upon the air. How quickly clear thought and inspiration fail in a crowded church when the windows are closed! We must escape to the open spaces, where God's clear air comes to us fresh and invigorating from the sweep of far distances.

The Cause of Imperfect Abiding

The great cause of imperfect abiding in the Christian life is living too much in the presence of our fellows and too little in the presence of God. "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16 : 11). Health and perfect physical development are not found by constant residence among the crowds. Nor will that individual whose life is crowded perpetually with complex sense-impressions and multitudinous human contacts, whose ears are dimmed with ceaseless voices, and whose vision is confused by constant gazing at the passing of the world throng, develop an inner life of abiding peace and soul-health.

A Glorious Possibility

But the glorious thing about the life of abiding is that spiritually we are always able to disentangle ourselves from the insistent presence of physical impressions and seek those uplands where our spirits may bathe in the ozone of God's boundless life. Deep into the intricacies of our spirit we may draw the living breath of his being, until the heart of our soul responds by a deep, steady pulse-beat which draws his imparted life through the arteries and veins of our spiritual nature, until every farthest cell has caught its full

burden of divine life; and washed in the oxygen of God's nature, every fiber of our spirit gives fresh and normal response to the stimulus of the Great Spirit.

En Rapport with the Master

God never permits our soul-health to be dependent upon the external environment of our lives. One swift upward glance to the throne out of the mirk of the day's strife will serve to put us *en rapport* with the Master. One deep breath of God's Spirit as we lift our souls above the day's toil will fill our whole spirit with him who breathed the breath of life into man and said, "It is good." And then underneath the eddying currents of life's resistless stream, will continue that constant flow of the subconscious carrying the main forces of our lives in the direction of God's life. The innumerable details of the busy day will touch the surface only, while the great undercurrent of the subconscious will maintain that high union of the spirit with God; and just as the functions of respiration and circulation are carried on beneath the threshold of the conscious life, so apart from our conscious thinking, our spirits having once consciously sought the free breezes of the heavens, will continue subconsciously that process of receiving Him whose words alone are spirit and

life. The life of one who has definitely sought and found such an experience as this, will be governed by such a deep and abiding peace that the ordinary cares and troubles of life will not ruffle the calm of his spirit, and even the deep waters of affliction will not disturb the peace of his soul.

An Experience of Continued Heart Rest

Let us be assured that such an experience of continued heart-rest is not beyond any one of us. It belongs indeed to the normal and healthy soul. Nor can we any more expect to maintain a healthy body while breathing into our system vitiated air, deficient in the life-sustaining element, oxygen, than to maintain soul-health while failing to maintain that spiritual circulation of the life of God within and without which comes to us from abiding union with him.

VI

THE HEART

Let my heart be sound in thy statutes.—*Psalms 119 : 80.*

For it is from the overflow of the heart that the mouth speaks. A good man from his store produces good things, and a bad man from his store produces bad things.
—*Matthew 12 : 34, 35.*

THE HEART

A Competent Heart

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4 : 23). There is sound physiological sense in these words of the sage. The integrity of the life-processes is intimately dependent upon the competency of the heart. It is the main central pumping-station, supplying the initial impulse to the streams of nutritive fluids which are distributed throughout the system for its support and growth. No man can be thoroughly equal to his life’s task, whether in a mental, physical, or spiritual sense, unless this central power-station is competent to sustain the steady, uninterrupted flow of energy required. The competency of the individual depends upon the competency of the heart.

An Interesting Patient

Among the numerous patients visiting the dispensary connected with Emmanuel Hospital in Capiz, P. I., was a young Filipino about eighteen years of age. He took his seat in the consul-

tant's chair, or rather, slumped down into it, in a perfectly spineless fashion, and I began the usual list of questions and routine examination. I learned that he was a high-school student, and inquired regarding his progress in the classes. "Oh," he replied, "I just can't do the work required of me." The next question was about his experiences on the playground, for the American missionaries and school-teachers in the Philippines are not only endeavoring to introduce their students to the rudiments of an English education, but have also undertaken the development of their bodies by teaching them American games, such as baseball, basket-ball, and football. "Oh," said he, "I cannot join in those games, they are too difficult for me." He was, evidently, a discouraging case; and the next question dealt with the work upon his father's *hacienda*, whence he had recently come. Again he replied: "The farm work is too hard for me; I can't do it."

Symptoms of Incompetency

Now it would have been perfectly possible to make an accurate diagnosis in the young man's case without any further investigation, but following the routine course, the cardinal symptoms of his trouble were successively elicited. His extremities were found to be cold; his finger-nails

and lips were of a bluish tinge, and auscultation of the chest revealed a decided heart murmur. The young man was suffering from an incompetent heart, and its incompetency affected every act of his life, rendering him unfit to compete with his fellows in study, sport, or work.

Pushed to the Wall

The individual with an incompetent heart is at a tremendous disadvantage in the world. He must carry the ordinary burdens of life and meet its daily duties while feeling within himself an inadequacy for the task, knowing always that his strength is just a little below that which the occasion requires. The world has no place for incompetency of any kind, and the incompetent individual is pushed pitilessly to the wall.

The Heart in Common Speech

The fundamental relationship which the heart bears to the normal manifestation of life's activities is shown by the manner in which the word has crept into the vocabulary of common speech, leading to its application to all manner of situations of the most diverse character. We speak of a *hearty* welcome, implying that there is nothing feigned or artificial about the reception accorded the newcomer. We say about the person who

manifests a disrelish for his daily work, that *his heart is not in it*, and thus indicate that the product will be faulty. The root idea is found in the word "courage," for it is hard to be brave with a failing heart. In colloquial speech we sometimes hear the individual whose health is robust spoken of as *hearty*, which thus becomes the synonym for healthy.

From the Heart

The spiritual heart governs word as well as deed. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12 : 34). David said, "My heart is inditing a good matter" (Ps. 45 : 1). He sat down to write a letter, and it was his heart which spoke upon the written page, voicing the warm sympathy of his soul. Many a letter is written from the head and is coldly intellectual, or occasionally it is dictated by the spleen and is bitingly sarcastic; but here was a letter which wholly suited the case, for it expressed the sentiments of the heart.

The Heart in the Scripture

The Scripture has a great deal to say about the heart, and vigor of the spiritual life is always associated with its healthy functioning. Acceptable service is afforded from "*a perfect heart*"

(1 Chron. 28 : 9). " Mine iniquities are more than the hairs of my head, therefore *my heart faileth me* " (Ps. 40 : 12). " They lied with their tongues, for *their heart* was not right " (Ps. 78 : 36, 37). " Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for *thy heart* is not right " (Acts 8 : 21). One's relationship to God is governed by the heart. " Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall seek for me *with all your heart* " (Jer. 29 : 13).

Half-hearted Christians

Few spectacles in the world are so pitiful as that of the half-hearted Christian; the man to whose soul the spiritual message has come, who has caught a glimpse of the radiant joys of " life in Christ Jesus," but who has found it impossible to yield that whole-hearted response which carries with it a dedication of the entire being, spirit, soul, and body, to the service of the Master.

Cardiac Insufficiency in the Spiritual Life

The imperfect response is all too common among Christians today. It would be invidious, perhaps inaccurate, to say that life is not present in such cases. There has been a feeble answer to the call of God, and in response to the rudimentary desire the life of Christ has been im-

parted; but far from presenting the glow of spiritual health, the new-made Christian has but a precarious hold upon existence; his life's functions are but imperfectly performed, and his activities are of a sluggish and feeble character. He is suffering from cardiac insufficiency, and the basis of his trouble is a failure to yield a whole-hearted allegiance to the Master. He is spiritually defective, and instead of taking his place gladly in the forefront of life's battle, he must occupy the invalid's couch in the Christian home. The flood of life runs so feebly in his veins that his chief concern will be the conserving of his own ebbing vitality, and no power will be left for an effort on behalf of others. He avoids vigorous exercise and strenuous emotions; others must carry his burden and minister to the weakness of his life; and his Christian experience is a pale, anemic thing which gives little satisfaction to his own soul and commands no respect from others.

Examining the Inner Life

Introspection may become a vice if the habit of constantly scrutinizing the inner experience is formed; but it is well in this matter-of-fact world occasionally to give oneself a spiritual examination, just as the prudent individual places him-

self at times in the hands of his physician for a scrutiny of his physical condition.

The Possibility of a Vital Lesion

The spiritual examination of the heart may be made upon lines very similar to those which would characterize a physical examination. We want to know whether we are organically sound, and whether the heart of our soul, having received the full tides of life from above, is capable of imparting the impulse which will send the streams of vital fluid pulsating throughout the system. If a vital lesion exists at the very center of our spiritual being, we shall know it by the symptoms manifested. There will be a coldness in the reactions between our spiritual selves and the lives of others; there will be a dull depression of spirit, a discouragement of soul leading us to feel our incompetency to impart any spiritual gift to another; there will be a pessimistic outlook upon life, manifesting itself in murmurings and complainings; and there will be a reluctance to join in the activities of the spiritual life which render more robust souls a blessing and enrichment to the life of the world. Every church roll is laden with the names of cyanosed babies of the spiritual life. In fact, the average church-membership list might well be spoken of as "the cradle roll,"

so predominant a proportion of it is composed of those who are still babes in Christ—babes who have never grown, and whose spiritual appearance indicates the imperfect functioning of a defective heart.

Pedro's Request

Happily, however, in the spiritual world, there is a remedy for the incompetent heart. I recollect a young boy about fourteen years of age, who was admitted to our hospital in Capiz, P. I., suffering from an advanced case of cardiac insufficiency. Poor Pedro remained with us a month or more, and while we were able, in some measure, to relieve his symptoms, the root of the difficulty was beyond any human power, and eventually we had to say to Pedro that we could do nothing more for him. During his residence with us, the little fellow had become quite attached to the hospital and the friends he had formed there, and was deeply affected upon learning that his case was hopeless, and that he must leave us. Many a time he had seen patients who were to be operated upon wheeled from the anesthetizing-room to the operating-room, and observing that they went into the room in a profound sleep and came out again to ultimately restored vigor, he said to me, "Could you not put me to sleep, as

you have so many others, and then mend my heart and put it back? ” In the process of time and progress of the science of surgery we may be able to do just that, but to Pedro we could only give one reply, and that a sorrowfully negative one.

A Miracle of Healing

But while Pedro's heart was incapable of being mended, a miracle of another kind had been wrought upon him, for he had learned of Him who said, “My son, give Me thine heart ” (Prov. 23 : 26), and to him the promise had been fulfilled, “I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh ” (Ezek. 11 : 19).

The Remedy for the Defective Heart

Let us determine within ourselves that a cold, unsatisfactory Christian life with a joyless, pessimistic outlook, is unworthy of the one who should be “a new creature in Christ Jesus ”; that a life of spineless impotency is unbecoming to the follower of the Master; and let us look for that remedy for the defective heart which is within our reach, when we will “search for it with all our hearts.” The will to be well is the modern keynote of health.

The Power of a Competent Soul

The inner change will entirely transform our outer experience. The "united heart" will so vitalize the system that living becomes a joy. The power of a competent soul receiving its strength from God will revivify the circulation until the effete products of spiritual stagnation are swept from the entire being, and the whole nature, cleansed and purified by the life-giving flow, will respond vigorously to the new impulses of life. The spiritual tissues nourished and built up as never before, will engage in spiritual activities which become the expression of the renewed inner life, and the "competency" of the very life of the Master himself will become apparent to all the world in us.

Churches with Incompetent Hearts

There are churches as well as individuals which suffer from cardiac insufficiency; and the symptoms presented by them are not dissimilar to those found in the analogous physical condition. When one enters a church of this kind, instead of meeting that atmosphere of cordial welcome which should make the outsider feel that the church has something worth while to offer him, one is impressed with the chilliness of the environment and of the indifference of the assem-

bled worshipers to the presence of the chance stranger. In other words, the cold shoulder is turned. The church manifests cold extremities, a symptom of defective heart action; for when the center of the church life is in warm living touch with the Master of life, there will be found inevitably the ready welcome, the quiet word of sympathy, and a greeting which will impress the visitor with the feeling that the currents of life run so warmly and rapidly that there is abundant affection left over to lavish on the occasional guest.

The "Blueness" of Incompetency

The cyanotic appearance of the serious heart case is also manifest in the incompetent church. The feelings of the membership assume an indigo tint. They are discouraged from a conviction, acknowledged or not, that the church is failing to meet the requirements of the situation; incompetent to grapple with the serious task of revitalizing its community. A normal, healthy growth is absent; there is no touch with the need of the mass of unheeding life about them; nor is there any vital and significant impact upon the farther fields of missionary effort which challenge the entire competency of the best life of the church. Such a church is a cipher in the sum of life.

Trifling with a World Task

Many and many a church today is trifling with the serious task which the Master has committed to his followers. Such a church has lost its touch with the world situation. It has been left behind in a side eddy of the great current of modern life. The pastor of a certain city church in a thriving manufacturing center, which has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years from a rural town to its present position of metropolitan predominance, complained that his church still preserved the standards and traditions of its by-gone rural days. While the people had been swept along by the growth of the community in their business, adapting their social life, educational equipment, and political development to it, the church had retained its rural conceptions; and the traditions of little beginnings still cramped and crippled what ought to have been a thriving spiritual enterprise. Its members were content to hold little meetings for the spiritual edification of a little group of little, stunted souls, instead of realizing that the growth of the city and the development of business and social life about them were a challenge to the best that was in them to bring the vigor of their own spiritual power to bear upon the lush growth of rank weeds, with which civic development had surrounded them.

Competency in a Needy World

It is vital that the church preserve a competent heart in the midst of the pressing problems of the day. It should permeate every department of the community life, and claim it for Christ. The throbbing pulses of the church's life should be felt throughout the city; its regenerating tides ever ready to cleanse, heal, and purify. But if the church is to exert this sane and wholesome influence upon the life about it, there must be channels uniting it with its nearer and farther environment. Many a church has surrounded itself with an insulating wall which cuts it off from the mass of life about it. It is like the encysted amœba.

The Separating Wall

Yes, the church needs a wall, for the Master said, "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing," and there must needs be a line of demarcation between those who belong to the world and those who belong to God; but there are many churches which have overdone the fencing business, and have conceived that church-membership is for the purpose of making a well-lined nest for themselves and theirs within protecting and separating walls. They have insulated themselves from the currents of the world's need.

Gates in our Fences

But the correlative truth is that we should learn to cut wide gates through our fences, and place illuminated welcome signs above them, so that the broad highways without may connect with the ramifying channels within, and together form a circulating system, whereby the life-giving powers within the heart of the church may be conveyed not merely to the needy spots of its immediate environment, but also influence the very uttermost parts of the world. A significant statement was made by a Maine pastor, who said that his ambition was "to relate the life of his own local church to the present world situation."

The Remedy for Incompetence in Church Life

Serious diseases sometimes require drastic remedies. The remedy for incompetency in church life today is being found in many and many a case in the revitalizing of its individual members by a determined cooperative effort to grapple with the task which the feebleness and indifference of past days has left unfulfilled. The church is rediscovering the principle of cooperation, or team-work. Its application to finance in the *every-member canvass* has revolutionized the whole field of church economics, and brought about a new realization of vigor and competence.

Its application to the spiritual life of the membership in the *fellowship visitation* has brought a new realization of the value of church-membership and all the church stands for, while in the new methods of gospel team-work we have a revival of the personal service which in the early years of the church's history led to the rapid spread of the gospel throughout the known world.

Union with the Master's Heart

Ingenious methods of team-work alone, however, will never produce a condition of competency in the church life. There must be, in addition, a new and vital reunion with the throbbing heart of the Master, that our hearts may learn to beat in unison with his; that our churches may be infused with the streams of his life's current; and that the world may thus be touched and blessed with the healing flood which flows for the life of the world.

VII

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

When the Apostles had re-assembled round Jesus, they reported to Him all they had done and all they had taught. Then He said to them,

“Come away, all of you, to a quiet place, and rest awhile.”

For there were many coming and going, so that they had no time even for meals. Accordingly they sailed away in the boat to a solitary place apart.—*Mark 6 : 30-32.*

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

Terminal Filaments

The skin contains a fine network of millions upon millions of minute nerve filaments, ending in sensitive points which receive the impressions of the outside world. The organs of special sense are merely elaborations of these nerve-endings to serve a specific purpose. Between my neighbor and me is my skin. It is a wall which shuts him out of my inner life, but it is also a recording membrane through which he may communicate with me. It is the medium through which I become aware of my environment.

Thin-skinned or thick-skinned

Some people are impressed more readily than others by stimuli from without, and we speak of individuals as thin-skinned, or thick-skinned. One may be abnormal in either direction; so responsive to external conditions as to go through life in a perfect misery of hyperstimulation, inasmuch that the spirit within fails to apprehend the relative values of things without and hence can-

not justly balance the life within and the life without, but lives in a constantly disturbed condition of maladjustment to environment; or, on the other hand, one may be so callous to external impressions and so absorbed with the inner processes of one's own life, as to fail to yield a normal response to the draft upon one's inner being through the impact of circumstances passing without. The first individual is a spiritual neurasthenic, who should pray for a normal balance between the world without and the spirit within. The second is the natural born egoist, who should pray that his organs of perception be sharpened to the need of others.

A Balanced Response

The healthy individual is neither thick-skinned nor thin-skinned, but uses his organs for the reception of sense-impressions in a normal way to put him into touch with the multifiform phenomena of the world without him. There is a balanced response between the impressions received and the thoughts and actions to which they give rise. He is careful not to place too much stress upon the immediate sensation produced by any external circumstance which impinges upon his nerve-endings, for he knows that these sense-organs are merely links in a chain of reaction, and the initial

impression, whether agreeable or otherwise, may not at all indicate the final character of the completed nerve-cycle. He trusts the integrity of his nervous mechanism and permits it to work automatically, believing that the principle of life within is greater than the mere machinery of life.

The Nerve Cycle

The nerve-train finds only its beginning in the sensitive filaments which ramify through the substance of the integument. These hairlike processes seize upon the vast multitude of impressions presented for their reception. Impressions of hot or cold, wet or dry, hard or soft; taste impressions of sweet or sour, pungent or insipid; auditory impressions of harmony or discord; all are received in much the same manner and immediately flashed to headquarters for consideration. The cycle of nervous influence is not complete until a response has been elicited. This may come immediately, as when the sensitive nerve-endings of the fingers flash to the brain an impression of excessive heat, in which case the process of cerebration is lightninglike in its rapidity, and no time is lost in telegraphing to the arm instructions to withdraw from the proximity of danger, with the result that the imperiled member is snatched away.

A Delayed Reaction

On the other hand, the information carried to the brain may be of a character requiring deliberation, in which case it will be recorded upon one of the brain-cells, and laid away for subsequent consideration. What may be the character of this consideration is not always clear; it may be used in the conscious thought of the individual, or it may lie dormant for years, perhaps never actively impressing the consciousness; but nevertheless playing its part in the great burden of subconscious thinking, which is always going on, the product of which will ultimately emerge into the light of the conscious brain processes while the steps in the manufacture of the product are lost.

No Impression Lost

One thing is certain, however. No impression received by the nerve terminals is ever lost, but may be depended upon to have its effect upon the development of life. It may produce an immediate response, as in the case cited. It may give rise to a train of thought, which ultimately crystallizes into a decision and consequent course of action growing out of deliberate conscious cerebration and judgment. It may be stored among the subconscious memories and have part in giving rise to one of those sudden impulses to action,

the origin of which we find it impossible to trace. It may meet its object in contributing to the formation of an ideal within the brain, or it may weave itself into the substance of the individual's thinking and have part in the development of habit and character.

Susceptibility of the Amœba

Even the amœba is susceptible to the effect of external contacts. If he finds that the medium in which he exists is growing cold and the temperature drops below that which is suited to his growth and development, he responds by rolling himself into a ball, secreting a heavy coat about himself, and passing into the condition known as encystment, when the pseudopodia are not produced, motion is impossible, and the infinitesimal creature lies dormant, hibernating until a better state of affairs shall be established about him.

A Spiritual Skin

We have a spiritual skin, which separates us from our neighbor, but at the same time puts us *en rapport* with him. The nerve-filaments of our spiritual life ramify here, and we know our fellows by the varied impressions they produce upon us. The contacts of the spirit life are multitudinous, and our own complex character often re-

flects the accumulated effect of the influence of a myriad other lives.

Thin-skinned Christians

There are thin-skinned and thick-skinned Christians. The former are those sensitive individuals who allow the immediate sensation of any particular experience to govern their thinking and subsequent action as regards it. Their sense-perceptions are so delicate that a rebuff will close their mouths, and an uncongenial atmosphere will apparently modify their whole character. A fancied slight under the microscope of a morbid spirit will be magnified to the dimensions of a determining factor in life's relations. There will be a sudden expansion of soul to a word of praise, while the touch of a wholesome criticism will shrivel the heart within them. Their contacts with others result in an alternation of anguish and joyous elation. Their activities are based on the sensation of the moment, they are unstable in their opinions and judgment, and their characters develop superficiality and unreliability. They will take up readily some new form of Christian service, but the first cold breath of difficulty or opposition leads them to abandon it. No solid structure of Christian character can possibly be built upon such a foundation.

Thick-skinned Christians

The thick-skinned Christian, on the other hand, pays little attention to the opinion of others. He is not easily affected by impressions from without. There is a self-sufficiency which renders him more or less independent of his fellows. The prime end of his being seems to be the seeking of his own spiritual ease. He can never meet the need of life by pouring out the wealth of his own inner powers, for he has in a sense insulated himself from a real understanding of the situation without. He has built a corral about his own soul, and there are no gates in it. If he engages in Christian work, he does so upon theory rather than experience, and hence his activities, not having been called forth by the stimuli of actual sense-perceptions, are artificial. He has a system of theology ready made, and elaborated down to the last detail, for it is the product of his inner thought ungoverned by the corrective impact of contact with the opinions of others. This he is ready to fit upon other souls, but there is little perception upon his part that real Christian activity consists of the genuine action and reaction of life upon life and the imparting from one to another of that inner virtue which a life of continued contact with God has laid up. He is a static rather than a dynamic Christian.

The Normal Christian

With the normal Christian, however, life's contacts are made very delicately. There is a fine balance between impressions received and impulses originated. He has a perfect faith in the normal outworking of life. He believes that his organs of sense-impression will receive life's contacts normally; that they will be recorded by the spirit within and give rise to a healthy reaction. He is not unduly elated by the agreeable, nor entirely cast down by the disagreeable impressions which are made upon him, for he knows that in the Christian life what a man will do with sense-impressions is largely within his own volition. Instead of being "like the waves of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed" (James 1 : 6), he is master of his own soul and dominates the impressions produced upon him by every external circumstance.

Governing Circumstance

It is in this that the soul of man rises superior to the lower animals, that he transcends circumstance and molds his environment to his own will. The amoeba reacts to the cold, and encysts; man braves the cold, investigates its laws, controls them, and rises superior to temperature. Likewise the Christian rises superior to

the ordinary man by governing his nervous reactions and choosing the effect which circumstances shall have upon him. In the physical body, there is a system of nerves known as the inhibitory nerves, which have to do with the control of functions which might otherwise be overstimulated. Spiritually, the normal Christian inhibits those impressions and impulses which would tend to disorganize the fine adjustment of his spiritual balance. He chooses that his spirit shall not be depressed, that evil suggestion shall not contaminate him, that rebuff shall not cause his soul automatically to close. He chooses that the stimuli of life shall pass into his thinking as constructive principle, giving rise to counteraction of noble deed, of high initiative, of daring enterprise.

The "Interpreter's House"

Once again we are led into the "interpreter's house" of the imagination. To the man who lacks this master-key to the situation, life is an unsolved riddle. He wanders in a maze of unrelated experience. He suffers from a multitude of sensory impacts, which are contradictory in their meaning. But when touched by the magic of the consecrated imagination, the multitude of external impressions become intelligent to the inner spirit; the dissonances of life are resolved, and

the God-controlled brain manufactures from the material brought to it from without great plans to modify the world's life.

Initiative

Initiative depends upon the imagination. There can be no large grasp of a world need without it. The interpretation of the phenomena present in any given set of circumstances becomes large and significant when touched by the imagination. The spirit-filled brain elaborates a plan, and decisive action is the outcome of it. The inspired movements of history have been due to the fact that some individual has gathered up the innumerable sense-impressions coming to him from without and, interpreting them under the guidance of a God-directed imagination, has grasped their inner meaning in relation to the development of the universe and, in completion of the nervous cycle, has found generated within his brain a corresponding plan of action.

Original Conceptions

The imagination has to do both with the interpretation of the impressions received and with the execution of the plan initiated. Without it one does not enter into a broad and sympathetic comprehension of the world's need, nor can one

conceive a bold and well wrought-out method to meet it. Decisive action in the right direction is the outcome of initiative governed by an imaginative grasp of the need. Out of the spirit's interpretation of the multitude of sense-impressions conveyed to the brain from the innumerable terminal nerve-filaments, there spring definite decisions as to certain lines of action. The conscious process of comparison and judgment leads the individual to dismiss one line of conduct and adopt another, to reject that which seems unsuited to achieve the desired end and seek for exactly that method which will accomplish the desired result. When this process of consideration and selection is carried on in the light of a heaven-touched imagination, the brain will often give rise to conceptions which seem entirely original.

Acting upon Impulse

The reaction growing out of sensory impressions, however, is not always the result of conscious deliberation. The whole process may take place below the threshold of conscious thought, and the action generated may emerge as a sudden impulse. Impulses are not always to be depended upon, for they may be the result of sense-impressions of the less worthy sort; but we need to learn that an impulse may be as logical and funda-

mentally sound as any carefully thought-out decision. There are some men who would do well to learn to act upon impulse. Inhibition has become a vice with them. They automatically suppress every good thought which comes to them, and render their lives empty and devoid of initiative through fear of doing something unusual. Mrs. Grundy is the *bete noir* of such timid souls. The daring spirit sifts his impulses in a flash, decides which are the good, and yields to them.

Spiritual Freshness

To preserve the fine edge of spiritual perception, to interpret broadly the messages of life through the sense-impressions telegraphed to the brain, to sift, sort, and compare them, to cast about them the aura of a great comprehension, and then boldly to outline life's fitting action—this requires a condition of physical and spiritual freshness. The imagination is the first faculty to be attacked by the toxins of fatigue. No broad conception or original action may be expected from a weary brain.

An Overstrained Life

There are men who lead an overstrained life, either because the economic situation forces them to excessive hours of labor, or because they choose

to crowd their leisure hours with the unworthy pursuit of pleasure to the extent of encroaching upon the time which should be given to sleep. Such individuals become habitually weary. The system is never entirely free from the poison generated by fatigue. They take up the day's work under a heavy handicap, for the habitually weary worker is capable only of routine labor of a comparatively low order. Creation and invention are relatively impossible to him. The young man who spends his nights in dissipation is very unlikely to rise to a high position in the business world.

The Great Restorative

Sleep is the great restorative of the nervous system. "If he sleep, he shall do well," is the accurate statement of a great general principle. We get a grip upon ourselves once more, and after the quiet hours during which every sensory terminal has been quiescent, we are ready once more to welcome the rush of a million impinging phenomena, taking them gladly to our heart, extracting their hidden meaning, and initiating a ready response. We trust ourselves in the hands of God when we sink to sleep, and God repays us by a returning consciousness alert as only the well rested can be.

Heart Rest

Equally there must be heart-rest for the individual who would preserve the delicate balance between the intake and the outgo of his spiritual life. We touch the lives of our fellows in a thousand spiritual contacts, and unless there be within us that freshness of soul which comes from communion with Him who said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," it is quite certain that we shall be unable to respond to those impressions with the vigorous soul initiative which will meet our brother's need.

The Quiescence of Soul

The quiescence of sleep has a very real counterpart in the spiritual life. Sometimes the soul becomes so overburdened with the demands made upon it, the nerves so wearied with the reception of millions of impressions and the effort to send forth the virtue called for, that the spirit cries out for the oblivion of forgetfulness. It is good to know at such times that the Master has anticipated this need on the part of his servants, and that he repeats to us once more the words with which he calmed the nerves of his overwrought disciples, when he said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile," and thus forgetting the confusion of the external voices and the nerve-

racking strain of sense-impressions, we enter into the perfect rest of him who "giveth his beloved sleep" (Ps. 127 : 2).

Rest of the Spirit

Rest of the spirit does not involve cessation of function. It is rather a diversion of the nervous force into less frequently used channels, the calling into play of other portions of the brain. It is a common error to suppose that religious earnestness requires the bow to be ever strung. Jesus elected to accomplish his entire earthly ministry in the brief space of three years, and yet it is manifest that these years contained frequent periods of relaxation and recreation.

Humor and Religion

It is a fair question whether humor is not the natural corollary and corrective of spirituality. Jesus has been called "the Man of Sorrows," and unquestionably there was a predominant gravity about his life, and yet there are occasional evidences of a keen sense of humor, as well as a readiness to enter heartily and sympathetically into the lighter phases of social life. Certainly humor is a powerful reenforcement to a spiritual message, and the preacher who can temperately and naturally reach the source of human smiles

which lies so close to the fountain of tears, is the one who can most profoundly stir the human heart.

The Rhythm of Spiritual Experience

There are nodes and amplitudes in the spiritual experience of every man, and the recessions are as normal and necessary as the fuller tides of feeling. We have happily emerged from the age of monasticism and asceticism, and now know that the happy flow of life in lighter vein which one finds in the Christian home, the recreation of muscle and nerve in games and healthy sport, the relaxation which comes from roughing it by stream and lake and among the mountains and woods, the enrichment of mind and heart from the contemplation of natural beauty, as well as the satisfaction of the artistic instincts found in noble music and beautiful pictures, all help to form the subsoil for a healthy growth of spiritual power.

Increments of Power

The starting-point for heart-rest is the assurance that our wills and conduct are in harmony with God's. But when such a confidence is present, we are free to let the mind and heart relax in the unstrained joy of a communion which needs

not to be always explaining and exploiting itself; and after such a period of holiday relaxation one ought to return with great increments of spiritual power which have been accruing during the period when the spiritual exercises were to a large extent subconscious.

VIII

CEREBRATION

At one place when He was praying, when He rose from His knees one of His disciples said to Him, "Master, teach us to pray."—*Luke 11 : 1.*

In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness; for we do not know what prayers to offer nor in what way to offer them. But the Spirit Himself pleads for us in yearnings that can find no words, and the Searcher of hearts knows what the Spirit's meaning is, because His intercessions for God's people are in harmony with God's will.—*Romans 8 : 26, 27.*

I will pray in spirit, and I will pray with my understanding also.—*1 Corinthians 14 : 15.*

CEREBRATION

The Cerebration of the Soul

Add a consciousness of the presence of God to the ordinary process of human thought, and you have prayer. Hence prayer might well be called the cerebration of the soul. We think God's thought with him, and as we pursue the ordinary train of our daily meditation in the presence of God, our mental processes become worship, because we recognize his presence in all about us; thanksgiving, because his goodness is so manifest; petition, because we and all our fellows have such need of him.

Sorting Our Stimuli

The process of thought begins in the impressions of external stimuli, sorting, classifying, and storing them. The associational fibers of the brain then enable us to weigh, compare, and rearrange them, and the comparison gives rise to new ideas growing out of the combination of various impressions and groups of impressions. Thus active cerebration eventuates in judgments,

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

impulses, decisions, purposes, and all those thousands of nervous reactions which govern life's activities.

Receiving God's Messages

Surround these processes with the consciousness of God's presence, and the impressions received from without become his messages to our souls. Our spirits note the varied experiences of life and await the inner reaction which each will produce when added to the multitude of stored memories. The spirit of prayer thus governs the reception of life's good or ill, and we are able to say, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8 : 28). It is not merely that we acquiesce in patient resignation to the will of God, but the cerebration of the soul actively sets itself to the task of finding the helpful relationship between the new impressions and the desire of God for the life.

Living in the Temple

It is in this way that we are able to obey the injunction, "Pray without ceasing." Not that we are constantly in the physical attitude of prayer, or formulating petitions in words, but our lives are lived in the presence of God. All the world is his temple, and in the sanctuary of the

soul the knee is ever bowed to him. In the life of prayer, when an external impression of evil is received, it produces a reaction of abhorrence, and then the cerebation of prayer automatically manufactures from it a petition that the evil may cease and that its victims may be freed. When an impression of need touches the brain-cells, the prayerful spirit throws about it the desire that the need be relieved.

Developing Antitoxins

The natural reaction of prayer upon one's own spiritual life has an analogy in the production of antitoxins in the human system. It is a well-established fact that in combating the effects of any poison introduced into the body there are elaborated in the blood certain principles which have come to be called antitoxins, and it is the protection thus afforded which gives the system immunity against subsequent attacks of the same disease. May not the prompt prayer-reaction of the penitent soul lead to the formation of a spiritual antitoxin which will serve to reenforce the life against subsequent temptation?

Generating New Prayer Ideas

Comparison is made between the stored memories of other days and every new impression.

There is adjustment and readjustment of ideas, all under the regnant influence of the Spirit of God. New prayer-ideas are produced and the heart flows out in many directions, led by the conscious and unconscious workings of the Spirit-dominated mind.

The Prayer of the Amœba

Even in the contracted existence of the simple cell the principle of prayer is found, albeit the prayer may merely consist of the amœba's interpretation of the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." Desire itself is a prayer, and in consonance with it we find every granule of the protoplasm of the protozoan generating within itself an urging toward the desired end which culminates in the projection of the pseudopodium. In a simple way it is the same process as human cerebration. The chemical reaction of some needed substance impinges as want upon the life of the cell. Previous experiences indicate the way to satisfaction. There is generated an impulse to repeat those experiences. The pseudopodium is thrust out, and the need is satisfied. The prayer of the amœba is the urging within its protoplasm. It feels a need, and its granules urge outwardly in the desire for satisfaction, pressing the one upon another.

A Higher Plane

It is elementary prayer indeed, which concerns itself chiefly with its own needs. Inasmuch as the human spirit has been made partaker of the divine nature, the prayer life occupies itself with the need of others. Multitudes of impressions are received just as in the case of the amoeba, but they are immediately brought into relationship with the preconceived impressions of God's love, of Christ's compassion, and all the heavenly graces with which God's Spirit has endowed the faithful soul. A process of prayer-cerebration takes place, wherein the spirit lays hold of the new thought, clothes it in the garment of love, and introduces it to God as the petition of the heart.

The Denouement of Prayer

Cerebration of this kind gives rise to two series of phenomena in the life of the one who prays. First, the constant comparison of new experience and prayer thought going on all unconsciously to the individual himself, weaves itself into the character and habit of the soul, so that life is passed on an ever-ascending plane. Secondly, the process of soul-cerebration results in earnest and definite decisions and purposes, which are consonant with the prayer of the heart; and these

decisions give rise to activities which help to answer the prayer.

Character and Habit

It would be an impossible burden for any man to weigh afresh the ethical merits of every act entering into the day's experience and to decide anew whether the proposed deed or word was in line with the will of God. It is here that the prayer-principle helps us. Constant dwelling in the atmosphere of God's presence brings about a character which decides in advance the appropriate behavior in almost every set of circumstances, and we do automatically the thing we ought to do. It has become a habit with us. But the root of the habit is our constant "practice of the presence of God."

A Magic Wand

The faculty of imagination is the very crown and blossom of human cerebration. It is a magic wand transforming and transfiguring the dull details of life. It takes the crude materials of ordinary thought and builds a prince's palace from them; yea, a very temple for the habitation of the Highest. Just as the pseudopodium of the amoeba acts as its agent in the fulfilment of its simple life cycle, so the imagination, the pseudo-

podium of the soul, represents the outreach of the spirit in its grasp of ordinary impressions and the manufacture therefrom of the power-compelling petitions of the soul.

Moving-pictures

The great agent for the accomplishment of results in the realm of prayer is the consecrated imagination. The imagination is kaleidoscopic. It presents us with a series of moving-pictures which pass with lightning rapidity. In a few seconds it is possible to review the action of hours and days. Repeated efforts of the imagination in one direction cut deep furrows in the reflective consciousness. These may be in the right or wrong direction, for it is perfectly possible for the imagination to present distorted pictures and even gross caricatures of the actual facts.

A Board of Censorship

The imagination is flexible, however, and susceptible of being molded. It may become the servant of the vilest and basest passions, but on the other hand, may be the active instrument of the most exalted service in which human beings can engage. Within the universe of the soul there should be erected a Board of Censorship to control the moving-pictures of the imagination,

and the three members of the Board should be the Conscience, the Will, and the Holy Spirit.

Controlling the Imagination

We may gather courage from the realization that the imagination is susceptible of being controlled when functioning in wrong directions, and that the pictures presented by it are capable of being corrected and brought into conformity with the truth, so that definite constructive service may result.

Mortgaging the Thoughts

In these days of multitudinous advertisement one needs to acquire a defensive armor against the constant solicitation of extraneous interest. President Wilson gave utterance to a significant truth when he said on a certain occasion, in connection with some clamant but inconsequential call which was being presented to him, that his "thoughts were mortgaged beyond recall" in connection with the crisis in international affairs, and that he "dare not let them out to other matters." It is possible to capture the wayward fugitive of the mind and bring it back to its proper allegiance, until "every thought" is "captive to Christ." He alone is worthy to be governor of Mansoul.

The Master's Method

"We know not how to pray as we ought." But the Holy Spirit will teach us, and one of the very first lessons in "the school of prayer" is identification with the object of our petitions. In order that He might become "a merciful and faithful high priest" our Lord identified himself with human nature and "offered up prayers and supplications." In praying for Peter, he did not merely pray, "God bless Peter," but he prayed for him that his faith fail not. Visualizing that scene in the atrium of the high priest's house, with its train of subsequent testings, he gathered these images into a petition for the strengthening of Peter's vacillating faith.

Condensed Petitions

The Master is no lover of volubility, and he has assured us that we are not heard for our much speaking. We need not undertake to describe to the Father everything that passes through our mind, but the vivid realization of the circumstances of the individual for whom we are praying, comes to us in a series of imagination pictures, and these we may express in a few words of earnest desire.

This method carries practical values for those who believe in prayer and desire to develop their

powers in a direction often neglected for lack of a method. The disciple's petition, "Lord, teach us to pray," finds an echo today in many a heart, and it is well therefore to explain further the method outlined above.

A Triple Alliance

We should form a triple alliance between the imagination, the agency which brings to us the picture of need, be it magazine, sermon, or personal contact, and the highest function of the human soul, prayer. We never find any difficulty in praying earnestly for those whose suffering and want we have personally witnessed. But he who confines his prayer-horizon to the boundaries of his own vision is poor indeed, and we have been taught in these days to broaden our sympathies until they embrace the globe. We cannot pray earnestly and effectively, however, for these more distant interests unless they become real to us, and it is here that the consecrated imagination is prepared to be of great service. One may then formulate the following simple rules for such prayer:

First, we should educate and enrich our imagination by perusing the careful and accurate presentations which are brought to us in the magazines and other literature bearing upon the needs

which have specially impressed us. We should correct and expand our previous images by a painstaking reading of the text of the articles and by studying in detail the illustrations. We should read to pray, and careless reading is apt to result in indifferent praying.

Constructing an Image

The illustrations which accompany such articles may be of more value than we have commonly supposed. The image presented to the imagination by a picture is more vivid, but at the same time more fleeting, than one which is laboriously built up in the mind by careful attention to the printed page. The effort required to construct the image from the text seems to imprint the outlines of the picture more permanently upon the brain. It follows that the ideal presentation is one which includes carefully prepared text and pictures chosen with a view to supplying the text with the many details necessarily omitted.

An Enriched Imagination

With this wealth of information regarding individuals, fields, native peoples, political situations, pressing needs, peculiar problems, and great opportunities, we may sit in quiet deliberative meditation, letting our imagination present these

things vividly to our spirits until we become indeed identified in some sense with the sufferings of the world and the perplexities of those who are grappling perhaps at closer quarters than are we with the problems of world relief and reconstruction.

The Culmination of Prayer

The culmination of our prayer will be when we reverently gather together the series of moving-pictures of our imagination, and present them to God with the burden of our own spiritual desire in a few crystallized sentences of actual petition.

Determinative Aspiration

Professor Fosdick has used in his book, "The Meaning of Prayer," the expression "dominant desire." I should like to add another phrase. I believe that prayer is determinative aspiration. Something will come of our petition. It is unreasonable to suppose that God would have put within the human soul the possibility of translating its greatest powers into communion with the Highest, without providing for the corresponding response to the prayer-expressed desire of the human heart. One may reasonably expect a response to every true petition.

An Occasion of Need

I remember upon one occasion in our mission field in the Philippine Islands, that my fellow missionary, Doctor Robbins, and I sat upon the bank of a river far in the interior of the province. We had been visiting the town of Dumaraw, and after conferring with the mayor of the town, as well as with other officials, we had been refused any opportunity to present the gospel message.

A Cry and its Response

As we sat upon the river-bank under the shade of the bamboo foliage, we felt a good deal like the Israelites who hanged their harps on the willow trees, and so we were led to earnest and definite prayer that in some way God would open this particular town to the preaching of the gospel. Looking across the river we noticed a crude raft of bamboo, with which it was customary to transfer passengers from one bank to the other. There came a traveler to the edge of the river, who called across in no uncertain tones the customary cry for ferriage: "*Balsa! Balsa!*" The prompt and matter-of-course manner with which the ferryman answered the cry was a picture to us of the way in which the Lord deals with his children who come to him confidently with their petitions. There is the cry of need followed im-

mediately by a response of power, reminding one of the verse in Chronicles: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron. 16 : 9).

Delayed Answers

The reply to the sincere prayer follows automatically upon the tracks of the petition, but it may not arrive until after the elapse of long intervals. It was not until nearly a year later that we received the response to our prayer by the riverside, and it came in an unexpected way and place.

A "Long-distance" Reply

I was upon the summit of a mountain of the province some distance from the town of Dumaraw, visiting a little church composed of rough mountaineers. There had been some recent conversions among them, and we were celebrating the ordinance of baptism in a little pool at the foot of a mountain spur. Among the friends who had gathered was a visitor to the village, who was so impressed both by the ordinance and the preaching, that he asked if he himself might not unite with this body of Christian people and receive baptism. It developed afterwards that he

was the vice-president of the town of Dumaraw, and it was through him that our prayers were answered and access gained to the town.

Put Yourself in His Place

We shall prevail in prayer as we make use of our imagination to identify ourselves with the one for whom we are praying. "Put yourself in his place" would be an excellent motto to adopt. Having spent many quiet minutes with the kinetoscope of our inward thinking, we have come to realize, in a new and compelling way, the missionary situation which has been the theme of our meditation. We have put ourselves in the place of our brother on the broader field, and have made his problem ours. The review of his environment and needs has not been merely passive. Every passing phase of our thinking has been wrapped about with the intense desire of our souls, and as we sum up the trend of the hours of quiet thought in a few spoken petitions, our meditation becomes determinative, and we join in unloosing spiritual potencies which spring to reenforce the powers already working.

Conducting a Prayer-meeting

There is no better method of conducting a prayer-meeting, whether it be in the church, the

women's society, the young people's society, or the Sunday school, than for the leader carefully to prepare a presentation of certain well-chosen portions of our missionary magazines each month, for reading in the circle, following this by quiet meditation upon the themes selected and brief petitions growing out of them.

A Link with the Far Fields

Nor can we better govern our periods of private prayer than by following the same method. The magazine before us forms a link between the worker on the far field and ourselves; the picture on the printed page is interpreted by the consecrated imagination and presented with the halo of our spirit's devout desires to God.

A Maverick

The horizon of one's own personal influence may be very greatly widened by this method of cultivating the prayer habit. We get into the way of associating our impressions, no matter from what source they come, with the upward look and the desire for God's help in connection with the new thought. You suddenly feel impressed with a need which ordinarily might be considered foreign to your own sphere of life and action. It is a "maverick" in the realm of

thought, but immediately the soul surrounds it with the desire that God's will may be done in connection with the new impression, and thus you capture it and make it your own, enlarging, in the process, the horizon of your prayer life.

The Higher Atmosphere

Another practical application of this view is that the mind which is accustomed to training the imagination for cooperation in prayer, will soon acquire the habit of associating the desireful frame of mind with all the workings of the imagination, so that the moment a picture of need or an image of opportunity is presented, no matter what work the individual may be engaged upon at the time, the attitude of prayer will fashion the new picture into a petition to the throne of Grace, and the whole life will be lived in the higher atmosphere of communion with the Father regarding the needs of his world.

Abiding

As the mind thus becomes habituated to prayerful consideration in connection with practically everything that comes into the life, we achieve that attitude of spirit which Christ laid down as the norm of every truly Christian life, i. e., we abide in Him; and as we abide in him, his de-

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

sires become our desires, and the mainspring of our own life's energies becomes actuated by the indwelling spirit of the Master.

Abide in me! That mystic word of thine, O sovereign Lord,

Is all too high, too pure, too deep for me;
Weary with striving and with longing faint,
I breathe it back in prayer again to thee:
Abide in me! O'ershadow by thy love
Each half-formed purpose and dark thought of sin,
Quench ere it rise each selfish low desire,
And make my heart as thine calm and divine.
As some rich perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So when thou dwellest in a mortal soul
All heaven's own sweetness seems about it thrown.
The soul alone like a neglected harp
Grows out of tune and needs that touch divine.
Dwell thou within me, tune and touch each chord,
Till every note and string shall answer thine: Abide in me!

There have been moments pure when I have heard thy voice and felt thy power;
These were but seasons beautiful and rare.
Abide in me, and they shall ever be.
I pray thee, Lord, fulfill my earnest prayer,
Come and abide in me, and I in thee.

—*Author Unknown.*

IX

VISION

Where there is no vision, the people perish.—*Proverbs 29 : 18.*

Your young men shall see visions.—*Acts 2 : 17.*

I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.—*Acts 26 : 19.*

VISION

Interpreting Truth

The shepherd lad, David, interpreted spiritual truth in the descriptive terms of those phases of life which were more familiar to him. Many and many an hour of quiet watchfulness he had spent under the glory of the tropic stars, with the soft breezes of the summer night breathing about him; and it was the intense conviction of a devout spirit reacting to the wonder of a world of marvels, which led him to cry, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

A Physician's View

Had he been a modern physician with that same earnest heart, stirred and impressed by the miracles of fine adjustment manifested in the intricate detail of human anatomy, he would very likely have expressed the same thought by saying, "The human frame declares the glory of God, and the vertebral column is a demonstration of his handiwork."

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

The Atlas and Axis

A study of vision starts with the spine, for the amplitude of man's powers of observation are due to the wonderful mechanism of the two upper vertebrae. These bones are known as the atlas and the axis; the former being the osseous ring which supports and balances the head, and the latter presenting the projecting hinge upon which the cranium turns. Together they are so accurately adjusted as to permit the utmost freedom of motion. The action of certain muscles of the neck will throw the head forward so that the vision is cast upon the ground immediately before one, circumscribing the outlook to the narrow horizon of one's immediate environment. Or muscular action will hold the head erect, allowing it to turn from side to side, and the eyes take in the far vista of the distance, limited only by the rotundity of the earth's formation; while again, the contraction of the posterior muscles of the neck lifts the vision to higher levels, and the immensity of the universe is outspread before the gaze.

Downward, Outward, and Upward Vision

Surely divine wisdom is manifest in this varied functioning. The multiform experiences of human life make demands upon the widest variety

of physical capacity. He who would know the details of the world in which he lives, must be content at times with the downcast vision and the concentrated attention of one who fixes his eyes upon the unconsidered trifles, which after all are not trifles, of daily life. But he must also be ready, by the steady, level gaze of the broad-minded man of the world, to relate the details of his own narrow environment to the farther vision of larger fields. The downward look must be varied by the outward look, and the details of the circumscribed life compared with and corrected by the generalities of the world which lies beyond. But no man who has truly read the message of the daily detail of his own life, and interpreted the vision of the broad horizon, will be content until he has lifted his head still farther and caught the upward look which penetrates the infinite spaces where God dwells.

Fixation of the Soul's Vision

The downward look is concerned with the vision of duty. One must needs concentrate the attention to take in the details which lie close at home. No service of any real importance can be accomplished without this earnest, determined fixation of the soul's vision upon the thing in hand. There are certain tasks which can be done

blindly, but they are the routine labors of the hand, which by frequent repetition have become automatic. The task worth while is new every day and requires that we bring to bear every faculty of the soul upon its accomplishment.

A Complicated Combination

The clear-cut images of near vision are not achieved without effort. A complicated optical combination is required. To the downward bent gaze must be added the focusing of the double image and the adjustment of the crystalline lens by means of the ciliary muscle. This adjustment is automatic but none the less marvelous.

Myopia

The very difficulty which is experienced in certain abnormal conditions demonstrates the essential importance of this need for concentration. We do it apparently without effort, but the sufferer from myopia knows that the effort is present although unperceived. A friend of mine who suffered from this condition from childhood related to me his experience. As a boy he was considered backward and dull, on account of his inability to read the blackboard. Little details easily escaped him. One of his boyish tasks was to sweep the basement, and he well remembered his

father's exasperation because he failed to sweep it clean. The real fact of the matter was that he could not see the dirt, but his oversight was interpreted not infrequently as obstinacy and laziness. Finally the state of the case became clear, and he was sent by his father to an oculist. His eyes were examined, and carefully fitted glasses were procured. They revealed to him a new world. He was now nineteen years of age, and never in all his life had he really seen. He went out from the optician's as though walking on air. The sidewalk seemed nearer, and he found himself lifting his feet unnecessarily high. He laughed at his own absurdity, but life was a new experience and the details of the world fascinated him. Birds, flowers, trees, and the faces of his friends presented a new and delightful appearance, for he had been half-blind to them until now.

Spiritual Near-sightedness

There is many a spiritual myope who not only fails to observe the details of his daily duty, but misses half the beauty of life. Duty without insight is irksome, but it is this very possibility of thorough comprehension yielded by the study of details which reveals to us the beauty and harmony of nature. The microscope cannot be used

without fixation of the visual apparatus. But it is this instrument which has enabled us to determine the inner nature of tissues and revealed to us the minute structure of the universe. Without it we should still be ignorant, not only of the microscopic life about us, but also of the intimate knowledge of our own being.

Comprehending the Details of Life

The microscope is an extension of the powers of fixation and concentration belonging to the eye. It enables us to know minutely the world in which we live, and knowing it, to appreciate its beauty. Many an object of crude and ugly aspect becomes transfigured under the powerful lens into a vision of beauty. So the common round of daily life needs to be transformed by an inner comprehension of the meaning of its details. When spiritual health reigns, the eye of the soul has a clear vision of every minute particle of life's structure and interprets the meaning of the detail in the glory of the completed whole, so that day by day life's fabric is woven with loving attention to every part as though, like Mary of old, we were weaving a seamless garment for our Lord. Unity and harmony are keynotes of the normal spiritual life. They come to pass when the soul can approve the details of life's endeavor.

Duty and Beauty

It is not merely for the convenience of amateur poets that the word "duty" rhymes with "beauty," for not only the rhyme of life but also its rhythm and complete harmony are bound up in the comprehension that these two ideas have a fundamental relationship. If "duty" seems forbidding, examine its minute structure and see if it has no elements of beauty. If it looms large and oppressive, look at that part of it which lies nearest and see whether the strength for the moment is not fully equal to the task. If the task of the day seems to have become commonplace and uninteresting, observe its detail in the light of the great end toward which you are working, and see if a new enthusiasm for the work is not generated.

Perpetual Fixation Impossible

No vision is capable of perpetual fixation, however, and the normal vision of the eye at rest is that which rests upon the horizon. If the downward gaze is perpetuated, eye-strain results. It was "the man with the muck-rake" whose form was ever bent and whose eyes were concerned only with the dust at his feet. It is impossible to see things in their right relations if we view them from only one angle of vision.

Gaged for Far-sight

The normal eye is gaged for far-sight. It is impossible to produce eye-strain by looking afar off. Strained vision results from looking at things that are near. Myopia is a disease. The restfulness of a view of the ocean or of the far plains of the West is dependent upon this fact. The ciliary muscles relax, the lens assumes its most natural contour. Focusing is at its easiest, and the image is produced upon the retina without effort, conscious or unconscious.

A Taxing Task

In Canton, China, one of the many native hand industries is the making of very beautiful jewelry from the iridescent feathers of the kingfisher. It requires the maximum of concentration to prepare and place accurately the minute pieces going to make up the feathery mosaic. Many of the workers go blind, and all of them suffer from severe conditions of eye-strain, their red and swollen lids proclaiming the violence which is being done to the visual organs. The vision of the far horizon is the right remedy for those conditions of eye-strain which result from near work continued through many hours of the day. Send these workers to sea, and their condition would promptly register a change for the better.

Arriving at the Point of Rest

Complete rest of body and soul is always associated with far vision, and even so the person who has arrived at the point of rest in his own experience is he who has followed out, not merely a detailed examination of his own environment, but has also caught the vision of the far horizon and related his own life and labors to it.

Christian Provincialism

The day for Christian provincialism is absolutely past. A hundred years ago it was possible for an individual to be born in some small interior village, to pass his life within its narrow confines, and to go to join the great company of the dead without ever having come in contact with the world lying without. The little details of his life offered him sufficient interest to fill the daily round, and beyond a dull, unrecognized yearning for something higher and better, he failed to develop any serious concern regarding the great sweep and swing of the world's life passing without. Today, however, the situation is entirely changed. Every one of us has become the center of the universe, for we are bound to the great mass of our fellows by a thousand indissoluble ties. The railroad, the steamship, the newspaper, the telegraph, and the telephone insist upon the

constant interchange of life's influences between us. We are truly bound up in one bundle of life.

World Citizenship

Above all people in the world the Christian has no right to an isolated life. There is a distinct and definite reason for his being, which lies in the challenge of the Master, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel." The first Great Cosmopolitan has enfranchised all his subsequent followers with world citizenship. We neither live nor die unto ourselves. The Christian is obligated by the nature of his new-found life to relate himself to all the world and find his neighbor in the antipodes. He must bring to bear the near vision of a careful scrutiny to the details of his daily vocation, to make sure that in some way it dovetails into the plan of the Master workman; and then he must lift his vision to the far spaces of the world until he comprehends the entire scheme of redemption and finds the routine of his own daily task transfigured in the light of a divine plan, in which it bears its proper part. There is something wrong with the calling of the Christian man who cannot discover this relationship between his own work and the kingdom enterprise. There should be connecting lines between our daily duty and God's purpose.

A United Heart

There is something wonderfully illuminating in the touch with the far horizon. "Thine eyes shall behold a land of far distances" (Isa. 33 : 17). To interpret one's own life in the terms of Christ's world plan helps one to that condition of inner harmony, of which the psalmist speaks, "Unite my heart to fear thy name" (Ps. 86 : 11). No one can do his best work or make his life count for the most while the inner motives and desires of his heart are at cross-purposes. There is nothing which will so tend to harmonize the discord and bring about the fundamental internal peace, which must lie at the base of the highest service, as the far vision which takes in the broad world fields and comprehends the power and scope of Christ's ultimate purposes.

The Church and the World Whisper

The pastor of a large city church once told me that when he first came to the church he had found a very annoying echo, which threw back the voice from different parts of the auditorium in such a way as to produce at certain points a medley of discords, rendering it impossible to distinguish what was being said. The remedy for the difficulty was finally found in stringing some two miles of copper wire back and forth under the

arching beams of the roof. Connected with the church was the inevitable small boy, interested in wireless telegraphy. The latter had constructed for himself a simple receiver, and it occurred to his ingenious mind that the wire would make a good aerial. He therefore attached his instrument to it and with the proverbial patience of Job, sat waiting for many hours for a message. His patience was finally rewarded and there came to him across the far spaces a whisper from more than a thousand miles away.

A Remedy for Discord

In many and many a church there is discord and dissension, which has grown through the years from too earnest concentration upon its own things; and the sovereign remedy for the unhappy wrangling of such a condition of ingrowing selfishness is to harmonize the medley of dissentient voices by touch with the farther world fields. So also the turmoil of a spirit distressed by contradictory feelings and impulses disappears when the soul comprehends the world need and unites all its forces in world service.

The Upward Look

A very little adjustment of the cervical muscles, and the face is lifted to the stars. No man's

vision complete until he has added to the close scrutiny of the detailed task and the far view of the world horizon, the upward look which puts him in touch with God. There is something faith-compelling about the deep vault of heaven. Prayer is instinctively directed upward. Christ came to us out of the heavens and disappeared again before his disciples' upturned gaze. Many a time the blue above has been resplendent with the revelation of God, and the unthinkable space stretched out before us speaks of his infinity. It is the upward look of the soul which brings heaven into the heart.

Heaven Touches Earth

We are united to God by a glance, and along the unmeasured pathway of the spirit's heavenward look descend the powers of the heavenly kingdom, to rectify and energize the powers of ordinary earth life. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness" (Isa. 45 : 8). So duty becomes glorified by the celestial light. The narrow environment of one's own dark lot is enlightened from above, and both the immediate task and the broad world enterprise become comprehensible, and we perceive their interrelationship in the plan of God.

X

SPEECH

For I must tell you, brethren, that the Good News which was proclaimed by me is not such as man approves of. For in fact, it was not from man that I received or learnt it, but by a revelation from Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my early career in Judaism—how I furiously persecuted the Church of God, and made havoc of it; and how in devotion to Judaism I outstripped many men of my own age among my people, being far more zealous than they on behalf of the traditions of my forefathers. But when He who set me apart even from my birth, and called me by His grace, saw fit to reveal His Son within me in order that I might tell among the Gentiles the Good News concerning Him, at once I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go to Jerusalem to those who were my seniors in the Apostleship, but I went away into Arabia, and afterwards came back to Damascus.—*Galatians 1 : 11-17.*

SPEECH

An Individual Message

“ And for me, that utterance may be granted unto me ” (Eph. 6 : 19). There is an essence which is native to the soul of every man, determining the reaction which shall be produced by every stimulus coming to him from without. What shall be the precise effect of any word upon the thought of another, none can say, for the impression from without, uniting with the individual genius of the spirit within, produces a reaction in every man's soul which is just a shade different from that produced in the soul of any other man. It is when the message reaches the inner shrine of great souls that great responses are given forth; but great or otherwise, it is true that every soul makes its own individual reply to the world call and has a unique message to give back in exchange for that which it receives from others.

The Growth of the Message

We spend our life in more or less successfully learning to give utterance to the individual mes-

sage of our own souls. That which passes within the hidden chambers of the heart is utterly concealed from the knowledge of our fellows unless the silver key of speech shall set free the interpreting message of the heart which has been gathering form and force through the years of silence. Incalculable multitudes of sensory stimuli have fallen upon the sensitive terminal filaments of the nervous system. Unnumbered millions of impressions have been registered upon the cells of the brain. Every one of them has wrought its own reaction. Through the long years of childhood and youth we have been chiefly animated question-boxes. Our lives have consisted in interrogating the world, which we have done by direct word, by tentative action, by experiment, and by choice. But as the years have elapsed, the experimental has become the judicial, and the judicial has given place to the initiatory; and one day we awake to discover within our soul a new-born song, an evangel of great joy, a message of compelling force, an interpretation which will add to the riches of the world's understanding.

A Messenger from Heaven

We cannot understand how it came there. It seems a thing apart from us; something which has

come by direct revelation. But it goes on repeating and reiterating itself in a thousand differing forms. Its first burden is for ourselves. It is like a messenger from heaven sent to interpret all the questionings and doubts of life's conflicting experience. It harmonizes this difficulty and quiets that tremor, it hushes this disquieting thought and brings out the hidden meaning of that dark saying. Its illuminating ray casts light upon the path which we trod in darkness and enables us to leap to an understanding of the calamity, the meaning of which all our past searching had failed to reveal. It falls like a healing message of peace upon the raw and bleeding surface of feelings which have been lacerated through years of misunderstood suffering; it robs the bitter years of their root of irritation, and fills the blank days with a song of joy.

Every soul hath its song,
Its melody divine
Rising to ecstasy,
And so hath mine.

A Torch Within the Soul

Through the long days of groping we have felt that one day our own message would come to us; and when it does, we take the messenger to

our heart and caress it tenderly as the child of our soul brain. It is not until we have examined the intricacies of our own soul and looked at its ancient furniture in the light of this new possession; not until we have tried the effect of the new interpretation upon the well-known opinions of our past days and revised all our former judgments by its inner meaning, that we come to realize that we have received this new message of our own soul's creation, not so much for our own benefit as for the benefit and blessing of the world of men about us.

The Necessity for Utterance

Immediately there is borne in upon us a vision of the reaction our message will produce among our fellows when it goes ringing out to the world, and a new-born impression of necessity is laid upon us: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." We feel the utter necessity for self-expression and repeat the prophet's experience: "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20 : 9).

The Organs of Speech

Anticipating man's absolute necessity for utterance, God provided the human larynx and or-

gans of speech. Tentatively and experimentally, we use them throughout many formative years, lisping the first broken syllables of infant speech, trying our unaccustomed organs with new consonants and difficult vowel sounds. Shall we ever reach the limit of variation of which the vocal organs are capable?

The Gamut of Articulation

We, of a single-tongued country, lack the facility of expression found among those peoples across the sea, where the geographical situation requires them to use more than one tongue. And farther afield, in the byways of the earth, one encounters sounds and syllables used by those whom we are accustomed to call barbarians, which we should find it well-nigh impossible to produce. For example, among the Eskimos one discovers a liquid *l* which has a similar sound in no civilized language, save Welsh. There is also a *g* which partakes of the nature of a rolling *r*. We, of the civilized lands, are far from exhausting the possibilities of sound in our simple speech. What if we find some day among the angels a language which is as liquid melody to our gross senses, and which exhausts the gamut of possible articulation! The "new song" of the Holy City may expand the limits of articulation.

The Best Meaning of Speech

The years pass and words become familiar to us; the accumulating of a vocabulary interprets our own ideas to us. We become fluent in the use of words, and sounds pass between us which we fondly believe express our heart's feelings, the one to the other. But it is only when we receive our own message for the world that we awake to the best meaning of speech and understand why we have been practising with vocables all these many years. It is that we may express our supreme thought to others and add to the riches of the world's life. Words come readily to us now; simple they are and sincere, for we have no need of verbiage to give utterance to this new child of our soul. Great thoughts are always simple, and the limited vocabulary of the unlearned is sufficient to interpret all of life. The riches accumulated by the inner nature through many years, have become crystallized and systematized, and we find ourselves equipped to express in varying forms suited to the comprehension of our hearers, the message of our own soul.

Dumbness of the Soul

One of the greatest tragedies of the soul life is to awake and discover oneself to be dumb. Dumbness of the soul is dependent upon two

main causes. It may be due to the fact that through all the years wrong choices have been made, unworthy pursuits followed, and low ends sought. The sorting of the impressions received from without has been with a view to ministering to our personal gratification, and the reactions growing from it have been poor and cheap. So that when the soul awakens, if ever it does, it finds no accumulation of riches, no store of inner wealth to share with the world, and the life passes songless and dumb among its fellows. For the message of the soul is only wrought through years of earnest seeking for the best, through a determination to deny the faithless wavering of the spirit and to cling to the assurance that the light of an understanding day will dawn. We learn to "comfort others with the comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God" (2 Cor. 1 : 4).

Poverty of the Soul

How poverty-stricken, then, is the soul which through all the years has sought only the lower good, ministering merely to the pleasure of the moment! Dumb, because it has never accumulated impressions of the need of others and how that need may be met; inarticulate, because it has never extracted from life the inner meaning of its

multiplying phenomena, and related it to the message of the Master of life; songless, because it has composed no symphony of unselfish service from the strains of melody which have come to it from other lives.

Casting Out the Dumb Spirit

Dumbness, for lack of a message, is the most hopeless of afflictions. In the chorus of life the individual sits mute amid the reproachful voices of his fellows. In the testimony meeting of the universe, every happy message is a rebuke to his inarticulate silence. If, perchance, the awakening of the soul has come, there is only one thing for this dumb spirit to do, and that is to go back into the school of life and by studying the harmony of other souls and the great overtones of the Master, to wait and work, until in the mercy of God the dumb spirit be cast out and the tongue of the soul be loosed. "This kind goeth not forth but by fasting and prayer."

Dumbness for Lack of Words

The other cause of dumbness is less terrible, for while the soul may dwell in silence, it is not for lack of a message, but because it has never learned to express this message in the hearing of others. There are individuals to whom expres-

sion comes as naturally as breathing, and there are others who find it well-nigh impossible to put into words the thoughts of their hearts. Their dumb souls struggle to break the bonds which fetter them, but they have never learned speech, and the world is robbed of their message, unless perchance they can express it through life and action. This also is possible, for there are silences which are eloquent, and there are humble souls whose stammering tongues have never been able to voice their feelings, who yet put the stamp of a great spirit upon the world by lives of unselfish devotion and quiet usefulness.

The Message Which Transcends Speech

There is other speech than that of the vocal organs. One man's message comes to him in the silence of the scientific laboratory, and is expressed in chemical formulæ which will render easier the hard lot of countless of his fellows. To many a woman, the crystallization of her soul's thinking has led to the crowded ward of the metropolitan hospital, and she has spoken eloquently to many sufferers through the strain and toil of days and nights which are given to no routine fulfilment of perfunctory duty, but to gentle ministrations of utter faithfulness. Perhaps most difficult of all is it for the factory toiler,

whose task lies in the monotonous repetition of a single group of motions through long hours of the day, to find his own message and give it adequate expression; and yet even here, the soul which has sought for the higher interpretation of life will discern the Master standing by the loom, and will learn from his lips the word which will relate the monotonous task and all the dull routine of life to the higher purposes of eternity, and so through patient endurance, honest service, blameless conduct, and human sympathy will find a way to express the song of the soul.

The Stammering Tongue

Self-expression is to be sought after, and the power of an unselfish life may be reenforced by well-chosen words. "Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25 : 11). Discouragement often accompanies a stumbling and broken effort to express oneself in speech. We feel that the stammering tongue can render but bunglingly the delicate meaning of the sympathetic spirit; and so we are often stung into silence by the feeling that we have failed, and failed repeatedly, to express in fitting words the thought of our heart. It should be remembered, however, that the sensitive spirit smarting from a conviction of failure before one's

fellows, cannot possibly estimate accurately the effect of the stumbling speech; for broken words and halting phrases may often convey more unerringly than the most polished periods, the touch of human sympathy and the message of truth which the soul struggles to express. Moreover, the pathway to perfection is always a *via dolorosa*, and we gain ability to control and direct the unruly tongue through the progress of years, until the faculty of speech becomes fully unbound and we need exercise no care for the manner of utterance, but only that the thing to be said be truly worthy.

The Barrier of Foreign Speech

No one knows so well as the missionary at work among a foreign-speaking people, the pain of having a message shut up in one's heart, while the inward urging of the spirit for utterance beats its baffled pinions against the stubborn barrier of an unfamiliar tongue. The early years of the missionary's experience abroad, while he is learning to adapt himself to new surroundings and struggling with the heart-breaking eccentricities of the new language, are the most critical period of his life. The grotesque errors into which he finds himself falling, the occasionally startling situations into which his mistakes lead him are

the lighter and more humorous side of the matter. It is well, perhaps, that one's sense of humor can come to one's assistance at such a time, as for example in the case of the young lady who suddenly realized that she had been telling her Oriental companion to go and fetch her a devil, when she had intended to say hatchet. Ludi-crous examples of this kind are innumerable upon every mission field. A certain missionary who went to China rather late in life, and who had therefore never fully mastered the varying tones which make such radical differences in the meanings of Chinese words, is in the habit, although he does not realize it, of commencing the Lord's Prayer, when leading in public worship, with the words, "Two old women in a field."

A Ripened Utterance

But there are times when humor fails to appeal, and when the irksome limitations of speech which oppose so formidable a barrier between the missionary and those whom he would reach, are well-nigh exasperating. The faculty with which a language may be acquired varies greatly with different individuals, but even to those who acquire it more readily, long hours of painful concentration and the constant training of ear and tongue to distinguish and reproduce

the unfamiliar sounds are necessary. It is this process of determined and painstaking effort which develops within the missionary's own soul a more earnest realization of the preeminent importance of the message. The travail of his spirit distils the honey of a concentrated message which has ripened and intensified during the days of effort required to break down the barrier of differing speech dividing him from his fellow, so that when the barrier is removed, he has something better worth while to offer than would have been the case had the language come without effort.

Missionaries in a World of Foreigners

After all, the situation is the same in all our lives. We are all missionaries among crowds of foreigners whose language we know but imperfectly. The gift of tongues is never bestowed gratuitously. When once we have discovered the message of our own soul, we must learn the language of our brother. It is a painful process, and the text-book is life. The projection of oneself into the other's life by sympathetic affection and imaginative grasp are the methods which will help us to win, but we must needs be taught by the Master who "spake as never man spake" and who expressed his own message so perfectly that he could say, "The words that I speak unto

you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6 : 63), before we can hope to convey adequately the inner thought of the heart.

Masters of Expression

There are certain masters of expression to whom is given the gift of song, and who can utter their heart's message in tones more fittingly perfect than are found in common speech. The union of the simple and sincere spirit which has received its message and grasped the true meaning of life, with the capacity to interpret this message in song, forms perhaps the most powerful existing combination for imparting spiritual truth. Which of us has not at one time or another been moved to the profoundest depths by the poignant sweetness of such a message, expressed in the satisfying tones of one who feels the message and makes use of his gift under the overmastering influence of a prayer that it may minister to the soul needs of his hearers?

An Unwarranted Incongruity

There can be, however, no greater incongruity than the gift of melody used by one whose heart is barren of understanding, and whose delicate vocal chords, endowed with the possibilities of heavenly harmony, voice sacred words unmean-

ingly. The practice of hiring trained singers to lead in the service of song in our wealthy churches, men and women whose lives, in many cases, are unworthy of the words their lips frame and voices utter in Christian worship, approaches very closely to blasphemy. There is something searing and killing about the habit of making use of the vocabulary and phraseology of spiritual things without comprehending the wonderful meanings conveyed by the words. It is "a savor of death unto death," and the individual who forms the habit grows a callous over the sense-organs of the soul. This has its application also to the glib phrases of traditional or habitual religiosity. If a pious phrase comes too readily to our lips we have reason to be profoundly suspicious of it.

The Song of the Soul

The gift of song is not confined to those to whom the accident of birth has given finely adjusted vocal chords. There is the song of the soul, as well as of the larynx; and the humblest may acquire the melody of the heart. We were making a tour of our Philippine mission field. All day long we had toiled under the tropical sun, over the rough highways and tortuous byways of the interior of the province. Here we

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

passed between fields of rankly growing sugarcane, there under the grateful shade of stately cocoanut palms. Again the way led through swampy sections, ribbed with the corduroy path of palm trunks, or along the precarious ridges of the earthy dams which separate rice-field from rice-field. The heat had been intense and the way toilsome; but the sun dipped low upon the horizon, and with the coming of the evening a cool breeze sprang up, dissipating the shimmering heat waves which enveloped us. We were approaching the village of San Jose. The ground led gently up in soft slopes to the palm-covered hills, and as we neared the village, suddenly there came to us, borne on the breeze, the faint whisper of a song, so delicate as to be at first unrecognized, coming and going, now louder, now fainter, but gradually growing in strength until as we neared the humble bamboo dwellings we could distinguish the words, "Father, I stretch my hands to thee." Humble folk they were, peasants, all of them, but they had not been "disobedient to the heavenly vision," and to them had been given the "song in the night." Living their simple lives among the rice paddies and the palm groves, in touch with the soil and gaining their living from it daily, they yet grasped the significance of life, and among them were those who

were as truly dedicated to a life of Christian service as the missionary who had come across the seas with the message of awakening for them. It is the long-continued effort of daily life, the repeated endeavor to express the best that is in one in the vernacular of common life, suited to the needs of one's fellows, which culminates in the transformation of that message into the song of joy and rejoicing even in the dark hours of the night.

XI

LIFE'S CONTINUITY

My children—you for whom I am again, as it were, undergoing the pains of childbirth, until Christ is fully formed within you.—*Galatians 4 : 19.*

In most solemn truth I tell you that he who listens to my teaching and believes Him who sent me, has the Life of the Ages, and does not come under judgment, but has passed over out of death into Life.—*John 5 : 24.*

LIFE'S CONTINUITY

The Fountain of Eternal Youth

Immortality is not unthinkable even in the physical realm. Recent experiments in the laboratory would seem to demonstrate that it is possible, at least theoretically, so to modify their environment that single cells may live for ever. Tissues have been preserved apart from the body, and under proper conditions have not only retained their vitality, but have grown and developed. Groups of cells preserved at the proper temperature and under favorable nutritive conditions have survived for long periods and fulfilled all the functions of their little lives. Even reproduction has taken place, the cell dividing to give origin to another of its kind. Periodically the cells seem to assume a senile appearance. They are about to grow old and die, but with the marvelously delicate technique of the modern laboratory it has been found possible to wash out of them, with proper solutions, the accumulating toxic products of metabolic processes and to restore the cells to their pristine vigor, starting them upon a new lease

of life. This may be done repeatedly, and no good reason seems to exist why it should not be done indefinitely. One is reminded, irresistibly, of the Fountain of Eternal Youth, for which Ponce de Leon sought.

A Daring Dream

There are, however, infinite distances between the primitive existence of simple organisms and the complex structure of the human frame; so that one may not too readily leap to the conclusion that what may be done in a low form of animal life is also possible for more highly developed beings, although daring souls have ventured to dream of even this possibility.

The Last Enemy

For practical purposes, there is no truer Scripture than that which speaks of us as being "through fear of death all our lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2 : 15). "It is appointed unto man once to die," and look at it how we will, death is an enemy and we fear the pangs of dissolution. The cessation of functions, the gradual loosing from earth ties and drifting away from those stimuli, which through our various contacts with those about us have brought to our hearts multitudes of impressions and evoked cor-

responding responses, is fraught with uneasiness, if not terror, unless there is such a firm grasp of the life beyond as to assure the soul that death is merely a transition: "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

Living the Life of the Spirit

Just this is the high privilege of the Christian soul. Through a greater or lesser period we have been exercising functions which are not dependent upon material contacts. Analogous they are, and just as real as those earthly functions which are now growing faint and approaching the point of cessation. We have been living the life eternal for years; "the Bread of Life which cometh down from heaven" has been the source of our soul's strength. Nourished and built up in Him, we have developed moral muscles and spiritual fiber, which have fitted us in advance for the new environment where the spiritual reigns. Earnestly using the strength given us from day to day, we have exercised those spiritual muscles in Christian service, striving to pass on the light and life given us that others also may become partakers of the divine life through our efforts. We have interpreted every fresh experience of life as it has made its impact upon our spirits, and from it have learned to see afar off, as well as near at

hand. Our vision has become coterminous with the far horizon of the globe, and perhaps this is why the Master sees fit to translate us to realms where ever farther vistas of knowledge and vision will be spread before us. The discordant sounds of daily life, as they have come to our ears, have been resolved and harmonized within our souls and have given rise to that new song of the soul, which is our message to the world. In some sense, the discipline of life has taught us the speech of the angels, and we awake neither blind nor dumb, for spiritual senses have been created within us through the passage of the years.

Prepared

And so we find ourselves prepared—but prepared for what? How simply and beautifully Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 5 : 1-5: “For we know that if this poor tent, our earthly house, is taken down, we have in Heaven a building which God has provided, a house not built by human hands, but eternal. For in this one we sigh, because we long to put on over it our dwelling which comes from Heaven. . . Yes, we who are in this tent certainly do sigh under our burdens, for we do not wish to lay aside that with which we are now clothed, but to put on more, so that our mortality may be absorbed in life. And He

who formed us with this very end in view is God."

Finding One's Self at Home

We learn then that the exercise of spiritual faculties during these present probationary days is developing within us that spiritual nature which shall find itself utterly at home when the change comes. How vitally essential it becomes to seek the normal and healthy development of that inner life, which is to inhabit eternity! To Paul the inner life seemed more vivid and real than the outer existence. "To me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1 : 21). "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2 : 20).

Partakers of the Divine Nature

It is the exercise of the spiritual faculties of which we have been speaking which assures us of divine sonship. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God" (1 John 3 : 2). And having been made partakers of the divine nature, the attributes of the Father appear in the child as we permit the spirit life to prevail over that which is merely material. "I am a boxer who does not inflict blows on the air, but I hit hard and straight at my own body and lead it off into slavery, lest

THE STATURE OF A PERFECT MAN

possibly, after I have been a herald to others, I should myself be rejected" (1 Cor. 9 : 27). And thus through a life in which the spirit is permitted to triumph "we are changed into His image, from character to character, even as by the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3 : 18).

The Possibility of Spiritual Health

What increments of power come to us day by day; what developments of latent possibilities; what growth in strength and grace, until we approximate perfect manhood, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ!" (Eph. 4 : 13). Let it be settled definitely in our minds that spiritual health is possible. Paul's ideal was "that we be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, but may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4 : 14-16).

Made in His Likeness

No man knows the hidden potentialities which lie within him, but this we know, that not one

whit less than the best will be the lot of those who permit Christ to be formed in them. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3 : 2).

The Fate of the Unfit

One cannot help wondering what will be the status of these feeble souls who, while their hearts have been awakened, have yet lacked strength to pursue with vigor the normal Christian life, have failed to grasp the world vision, and have no message of hope and cheer for their fellows. Will they enter that higher life handicapped in some spiritual way, analogous to those little blind and dumb children who are sometimes born into this life? What a fate it would be to graduate among the angels and find oneself mute and defective! What a sense of unutterable loss must come to those who during this period of earth trial have failed to develop those robust spiritual characteristics which should fit them for the new and heavenly sphere!

Life on the Higher Plane

Life's continuity will be upon that plane where souls converse daily with God, and spirits do his high service as part of life's natural order. Will

there be souls at a loss in that presence? We cannot say, but of this we may be sure, that God gives us now the opportunity of developing within us those physiological functions of the inner life which by their normal growth will assure us of readiness to take up life upon that higher plane which shall ultimately be ours.

Temperamental Piety

There are those who would hold that piety is a matter of temperament, and that men are good or bad according as they happen to have been endowed with a trend toward one or the other. Doubtless it is true that some find within themselves faculties more naturally alert to spiritual things; but we may be certain that no soul is lacking in those elements which make possible a response to the high stimulus of the Christian life. And given even the rudiment of a function, it becomes to us a matter of choice, whether or no we will develop it.

Developing a Faculty

There are certain groups of muscles which, in lower animals, are well developed and active, but in man are merely rudimentary. Such, for example, is the group found about the ear, the *retrahens*, *attrahens*, and *attolens aurum*. In

many animals, the elephant for example, these muscles are so strong as to enable them to move their ears readily. The same group exists in the human being, but while an occasional small boy can be found with the interesting distinction of being able to wiggle his ears, the most of us have these muscles so poorly developed as to be incapable of doing so. The encouraging thing, however, is that were the accomplishment desirable, we could acquire it. The constant concentration of our attention upon that part of our anatomy, with corresponding effort to move the muscles in question, would eventually produce the desired result.

A System of Voice Promotion

A prominent master of voice production bases his system of instruction upon this principle. He leads his pupils to a study of the larynx, and then teaches them to direct their attention to that particular group of muscles operating upon the vocal cords which will produce the desired effect. Frequent and determined concentration of the attention brings to bear the auxiliary powers of the nervous system and enables the pupil to make intelligent advance in the right direction, eliminating, thereby, many of the innumerable tentative efforts and false motions involved in a method

based merely upon a blind imitation of a set model.

The Physiology of Soul Life

The same practice should be observed in the development of the inner life, and here we discern the value of making a careful study of what may be called the physiological principles governing the life of the soul. We are not called by the gospel message to a mere "*Imitatio Christi*," but to the reception of a divine life which will, under proper conditions, work itself out according to the irrefragable biological and physiological laws which prevail throughout the entire universe wherever life exists. It is therefore not merely reasonable but essential that we should give careful attention to the principles governing the normal development of the spirit life, with a view to the fulfilment of those conditions which make for health and vigor of soul.

A Biological Conception

The Scriptures insist strongly upon this biological conception of the soul life. Conversion is not a barren, mechanical turning from one set of opinions to another, or even from one course of conduct to a better. Conversion involves the arrest of the attention, the opening of the heart, and

the preparation of the soul for a new and divinely imparted life. Christ speaks of the experience as being "born again." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." At the very outset of the spiritual life one is endowed with faculties which in every respect parallel the physical existence. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2 : 2).

Studying the Laws of Health

It is only in comparatively recent times that the physiology of the physical system has been well understood and the principles which make for the maintenance of physical health classified, but the laws governing the normal development of the soul life have been at our command for centuries in the pages of the New Testament, although not in classified form. They are as unerring in their operations and as absolute in their judgments and condemnations as the laws of physical well-being, and it behooves us therefore to give careful study to the physiology of the inner life if we would gain that happy condition of soul-vigor which is within every man's power. Some day to be ill will be considered a disgrace. Spiritual illness also may well be the occasion of a sense of shame for its needlessness.

Choosing the Best

It lies within the domain of the human will whether we will choose to develop those latent possibilities of spiritual power which God has placed within us. What a tragedy it is for any intelligent human being having the possibility of developing within himself spiritual faculties fitted in all respects for existence upon the highest conceivable plane, if he shall choose rather those base elements of the world which will accentuate the material and transitory in his make-up! Let us choose, rather, to make an intelligent study of the physiology of the inner life, and then turn all the nervous energies of our being in the direction of a compliance with those principles which make for the upbuilding of the soul life.

Not a Mere Mechanical Scrutiny

There is no desire to indicate here a mere mechanical study of the science of soul-health with a view to concentrating the attention upon the attainment of personal spiritual development, much as certain of the wealthy who have nothing of greater importance to occupy their time, are disposed to give their attention to a minute care of their physical health. Such a personal solicitude for one's own welfare is likely indeed to react upon the individual harboring it, for overatten-

tion to any physiological function not infrequently results in derangement of it. It is perfectly rational, however, to give careful study to the principles governing health with the view to conforming one's habits of life to the required standard. One may then forget the whole matter, pursue the higher ends of living, and discover that the physical health engendered by right habits ministers in the highest degree to the ends sought.

Conforming the Habits to the Standard

So in the spiritual life, a study of its health laws is rational. Having discovered what they are, there should be a determined effort to conform the habits of the entire being to the required standard, and the individual will then forget that the highest of all science is governing his life in the satisfaction which will come to him in knowing that his life is outworking in conformity to the great plan of the Master, not merely for the redemption of the individual, but also of the whole world.

Supermen

It may be asserted confidently, that the individual who will follow this course, will develop powers which transcend those of ordinary men. We have looked upon those giants who have wrought great things in the world, as supermen

created from a different clay, made of a finer fiber than the ordinary soul. But we are beginning to see things with a clearer vision in this generation, and are coming to believe that the powers which characterized these extraordinary individuals are not beyond our understanding, and that, in a measure, larger life may be within the achievement of all of us.

Triumphant Mediocrity

The great word of the day is triumphant mediocrity. It is an age of great constructive achievements, but these are not the product of towering intellectual giants. They are rather brought about by the growing recognition of the duty of thoroughness which has made many a common man take on the attributes of genius, by following his calling with such painstaking faithfulness as to achieve results far beyond what would have been supposed possible.

A Minute Obedience

These men have studied minutely the laws governing the sphere of life in which they have found themselves moving; and by obeying to the very letter the detail of the required program they have found that these very laws will crown him king, who obeys them. We see the glamor and

glory of achievement and join the popular acclaim which greets the successful accomplishment of a great work; we are inclined to glorify the caliber and genius of the one responsible for it, but we often fail to look back over the long trail which he has traveled in reaching the desired end.

Humdrum Details

Details are humdrum and tiresome, but they are the little daily submissions of will, whereby the wise say yes to the command of the Almighty, and they build up the highway which leads to the place of power. No possible drudgery could be more taxing and trivial than the steps in the surgeon's preparation for an aseptic operation—the cleansing of the hands and the finger-nails, the use of solutions and counter-solutions, the sterilization of towels and instruments. To the one who sees only the annoyance of minute and meticulous care it is maddening, but to the other who realizes that he is obeying universal law, it is a labor of love. And the miraculous achievements of modern surgery have crowned the efforts of him who has been willing to cooperate with the God of law in the alleviation of human suffering. God has a special affection for the man who will take pains, and opens to him his treasury of mysteries.

Achievements of Great Souls

So also in every great enterprise. A Goethals neglects no slightest detail and the oceans are joined; a Joffre verifies his plans to the minutest particular, and a great body of troops pushes forward to victory; a Peary scrutinizes in advance every possible contingency of arctic travel, and the North Pole is reached.

The Aftermath of Melancholy

Running through the experience of many and many a master of detail, there is a vein of sadness. After the great end toward which their energies have been bent has been accomplished, there comes a reaction which seems to bathe in melancholy the years which ought to be rich with the warm gratitude of an enriched world. They sense a certain futility about achievement and the human glory which follows it.

The Cause of Dissatisfaction

The cause of their dissatisfaction is not far to seek. They have been blind to the larger interests of life. Absorbed in the pursuit of the great end which led them on, they have failed to apply to their own inner life that great principle of obedience to the law of detail. Scrutinizing minutely the principles governing the task which

engaged their energies day by day, they have failed to study also the physiology of the inner life and thus by conformity with its laws bring harmony between their outer achievement and inner growth.

Harmonizing the Outer and the Inner

No happier soul exists in all the universe than he who has synchronized the study and accomplishment of a great task with the fulfilment of the laws of soul life. The one has reenforced the other, and having interpreted the message of his spirit in the achievement of his life, he may well say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." So also there is an aura of peace which surrounds the life of him who, knowing that he is engaged upon a great task, feels also that the spirit within him, rendering a detailed obedience to the laws of soul-health, waxes strong to nerve and energize him for the outer conflict.

Laws of the Inner Life

The physiology of the inner life concerns itself with knowing what these laws are, with the up-building of a glad free spirit: digestive organs capable of assimilating God's truth, a musculature strong for the accomplishing of great tasks, a vision that penetrates the secrets of God and the

needs of the world, a heart that sustains with its steady throb the burden of a competent life, and a brain that harmonizes every impression from without and brings forth its own original message.

The Soul's Satisfaction

Thus will there be built up an inner life of strength and power which will not be interrupted by death's transition. Life's continuity proceeding upon a higher plane and in an environment for which these years have given it perfect fitness, will be concerned with eternity's tasks which far surpass those of this present life, and with it all will be that deep undercurrent of peace and contentment which can only come from a perfect development in accordance with the laws of the Master of all life. "I shall be satisfied when I awake in His likeness."

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